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Challenges Child Life Specialist Faculty Face in Supporting Child Life Specialist Candidates Seeking Internships

Deborah Sue Fingerhut
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Deborah Fingerhut

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Review Committee

Dr. Joanna Karet, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Sydney Parent, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. Leslie VanGelder, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost

Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University

2022

Abstract

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by

Deborah Fingerhut

MA, Mills College, 1983

BS, California State University, Sacramento, 1981

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

September 2022

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges for students seeking clinical internships, and faculty have felt those obstacles trying to mentor students. The problem addressed in this study were the challenges child life specialist faculty at a local colleges face in supporting child life specialist candidates in locating internships upon degree completion. The purpose of this study was to understand the obstacles child life specialist faculty face in supporting child life specialist candidates in obtaining internships and what institutional support could be offered to alleviate those obstacles. The significance of this study was the necessity of child life specialist faculty to successfully mentor child life specialist candidates toward obtaining internships. The conceptual framework for this study was based on Kouzes and Posner's model of transformational leadership. Two research questions explored the obstacles child life specialist faculty face in supporting child life specialist candidates in obtaining internships and what institutional support could be offered to alleviate those obstacles. A basic qualitative design was used to interview 10 child life specialist faculty. Data were analyzed for common codes, categories, and themes from participant responses. From the data emerged six themes that provided a framework for the design of the project study. The Faculty Tool Kit is a 3-day workshop to enhance faculty skills and competency in mentoring students. The findings are supported by the transformational leadership model and provide a better understanding of the need for social change in the way child life specialist faculty support child life specialist candidates in their quest for internships.

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Dedication

This doctoral journey is dedicated to my dear mother, Frances Lasky and my sons, John and Patrick Fingerhut who have provided me with unconditional encouragement and support and without whom I could not have endured this experience to see it to fruition. My friends and colleagues have shared in this journey by supporting me unconditionally throughout this experience. Each of you have my ultimate respect, love, and gratitude for pushing me forward every day.

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Additionally, I owe a debt of gratitude to my child life colleagues for having faith in me through this journey by their continued encouragement and celebration at each turning point in the doctoral process. Lastly, I cannot express how humbled I am to have achieved this degree that was initially inspired by the academic achievements of my dear father, Kenneth P. Lasky, may he rest in peace. My final hope is that my own achievements will provide some inspiration and perseverance for my sons to accomplish all that they are passionate about through their own academic journey.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The problem addressed in this study were the challenges child life specialist (CLS) faculty at local colleges face in supporting CLS candidates in locating internships upon degree completion (CLS Faculty Member, personal communication, January 28, 2020). Local college CLS candidates must complete their degree and an internship before they are eligible to sit for and pass the national certification exam which enables them to be hired as a Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS). CLSs are healthcare clinicians who address pediatric patient psychosocial stress during healthcare experiences (Beickert & Mora, 2017; Thompson, 2009).

According to local college CLS faculty, time and resource restrictions contributed to the challenges of supporting CLS candidates seeking internships (CLS Faculty Member, personal communication, July 31, 2020). Another contributing factor was the lack of leadership training of CLS faculty who mentor CLS candidates through the process of obtaining internships and therefore, lack the knowledge and understanding to promote up to date information about where and how to seek internships as noted in the Child Life Academic Program Directory. Additionally, CLS faculty at local colleges had difficulty in acquiring approval for additional institutional resources to provide additional guidance and support in assisting CLS candidates in locating internships (CLS Faculty Member, personal communication, April 2, 2020). Finally, some CLS faculty do not hold clinical positions while teaching CLS coursework whereby they become disengaged from the rapidly changing profession and the Association of Child Life Professional (ACLP)

guidelines for applying to internships according to a recent survey conducted by the Child Life Professionals Data Center (CLPDC, 2019).

Rationale

The purpose of this study was to understand the challenges CLS faculty faced in supporting CLS candidates in obtaining internship and what institutional support was offered to alleviate those challenges. Stakeholders in this study were the CLS candidates who need guidance from faculty in the preparation of their internship applications and interviewing skills as well as the CLS faculty and administrators who want the program to be successful. The project for this study resulted in the offering of a leadership training workshop to address the challenges CLS faculty at local colleges face in supporting CLS candidates in locating internships upon degree completion and ways to address those challenges. Additionally, the project for this study provides a tool kit for faculty to enhance peer reviews as ongoing assessment of faculty leadership development.

This study contributes to a better understanding of the challenges CLS faculty faced in supporting CLS candidates seeking internships, which was an extension of the faculty's professional and academic roles as mentors and counselors for CLS candidates. Every faculty member who teaches CLS coursework is accountable for mentoring students toward program completion which includes securing internships as a requirement of the graduate curriculum design. As a planned outcome of this study, local CLS faculty were offered a leadership workshop to address ACLP internship guidelines and provide more information about supporting CLS candidates in locating internships upon degree completion. When CLS faculty have the tools and support to feel confident

with the most current ACLP information about internships, they experience a more rewarding professional role as a mentor for CLS candidates.

Definition of Terms

ACLP certification exam – The Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) advances the credibility of the child life profession by the Child Life Certification Exam (ACLP, 2019).

ACLP – Association of Child Life Professionals is the professional governing organization for child life specialists (ACLP, 2021).

CCLS – A certified child life specialist is a child life specialist who has completed internship and passed the Child Life Certification Exam (ACLP, 2019).

CCLS Preceptor – A certified CLS who has completed more than 4,000 paid clinical hours and is in good standing with ACLP with membership and certification fees up to date (Child Life Certification Commission, 2020).

Exemplary leadership – Leadership that promotes the conceptual framework of Transformational Leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2009).

Faculty-student mentoring – Faculty involvement in student mentoring for skill development and career guidance (Friedman, 2004).

HIPAA - The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act is a federal law that protects sensitive patient health information from being disclosed without the patient's consent or knowledge (HIPAA, 1996).

Transformational leadership – A conceptual framework for leadership skill development attained through five exemplary leadership practices (Kouzes & Posner, 2019).

ySIM – A type of learning which uses simulation with augmented reality (Foronda, 2018).

Significance of the Study

This study addressed the challenges CLS faculty faced in supporting CLS candidates in locating internships upon degree completion. The significance of this study contributed to greater knowledge and understanding of what challenges faculty faced and how to mitigate those challenges. The study outcome was of interest to CLS faculty at local colleges who wanted to learn more about how to overcome the obstacles of providing guidance and support for CLS candidates in finding internships. CLS candidates rely on faculty to successfully mentor them toward their career goals, which designates CLS students as stakeholders in this study as well. Without internships, students cannot complete the certification process at the end of the program. Failure of these graduates to obtain certification will contribute to a lack of qualified CLS candidates for employment and a national shortage of CLS professionals by 2025 (Carnevale et al., 2018). There is a demand for certified CLS professionals in children's hospitals because of the state mandate that free-standing children's hospitals must employ certified CLS professionals. The gap in practice was the inability of CLS faculty to support CLS candidates seeking internships as a requirement for certification (Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Hospitals and Related Organizations, 2019).

CCLS professionals are trained in therapeutic and medical play therapy, with a primary role to assess pediatric patient psychosocial adjustment to healthcare encounters and to provide therapeutic interventions to alleviate stress and anxiety. CLS candidates are required to complete coursework taught by certified CLS faculty before applying for an internship and to have completed practicum fieldwork. Competition for internships, according to Hay (2018), is incomparable to previous decades when fewer academic programs provided CLS degrees. Without an internship, CLS candidates are unable to complete their CLS certification and are therefore ineligible for employment in a hospital setting.

Research Questions

To address the gap in practice, the training for CLS faculty mentors provided an overview of Kouzes and Posner's (2019) leadership practices for higher education theory and use of the Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2000) that are deemed necessary for competent faculty mentorship. The leadership challenge theory, inventory and practices were the overarching conceptual framework for the study and the study project. This qualitative study explored the following obstacles faculty faced when mentoring CLS candidates:

RQ 1: What are the perceptions of CLS faculty about the obstacles they face in supporting CLS candidates in obtaining internships?

RQ 2: What are the perceptions of CLS faculty about what institutional support could be offered to alleviate those obstacles?

Review of the Literature

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that grounded this study was built on the work of Kouzes and Posner's (2002, 2009) transformational leadership model. This practice model was defined as transformational leadership or functional leadership as an approach that centers on the relationship between leaders (faculty) and staff (students), so it was an appropriate model to explore how leadership initiatives addressed students and training challenges. The Kouzes and Posner model in practice referred to the degree to which role models and mentors in higher education provide leadership that is transformational for students embarking on a shift from academia to real world experiences. In the case of this study, that would be CLS candidates' ability to obtain internships as the next step toward certification as a CLS and eventual employment.

There were several leadership styles identified in the literature, but the most prevalent in the literature was transformational leadership, an approach introduced initially by Burns (1978). This approach draws on leaders' moral values and exploits their ability to set examples and articulate goals to instigate positive change within social structures and individuals' behaviors. As a result, followers (students) can perform to a higher standard and develop their own leadership skills (Burns, 1978).

Since the early days of development theory, transformational leadership theory has been popular for organizational change based on the concepts of moral and ethical leadership behaviors that encourage and inspire rather than control behavior (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Transformational leadership became popular in the late 1970s and 1980s

following the publication of James MacGregor Burns' *Leadership* (1978), which is considered a seminal work in the field of leadership studies to this day. By recognizing the unique differences among educators and students, transformational leaders encourage their students by sharing their valuable knowledge and perspectives in engaging and creative ways. This fosters participation in decision making from shared insights and perspectives to help students become more autonomous. Initially, Burns conceptualized transformational leadership as benefiting society; however, subsequent interpretations have failed to focus attention on broader leadership characteristics such as leader integrity and the concern for social justice. Instead, attention was focused on the development of followers (CLS candidates) toward attainment of organizational (faculty) goals such as the number of graduates completing the program according to Bass (2003).

Research by Kahn (1990) and Mezirow (2009) contributed to the foundation of transformative learning. In Kahn's theory, engagement is promoted by personal preference (physical, cognitive, and emotional) and active, full performances. Engagement leads to higher performance, knowledge sharing, and innovation behaviors, in addition to greater health and well-being. Engagement enables institutions to develop a competitive advantage with leadership recognized as a determinant of employee health and well-being. Kahn's theory asserts that engagement depends on three psychological states: meaningfulness, safety, and availability, whereby people's perceptions influence their psychological work experience. Although this theory aligns with the conceptual framework of transformative practice in higher education, it does not address leadership training for faculty. Similarly, Mezirow (2009) suggested learning is a process to

transform problematic mindsets and changing the perspectives and habits of minds based on preconceptions to create openness to change. Mezirow used three core elements – individual experience, critical reflection, and dialogue – to create a holistic orientation and an authentic practice with meaningful relationships as crucial in transformational learning. Mezirow's contribution to transformative learning provides robust scaffolding for training faculty in helping students to achieve their professional goals such as internship.

Transformational leadership behavior and organizational development in education may hold several points of promise addressing the relationship between CLS faculty and CLS candidates. The first of these is the mentoring experience for faculty as a shared organizational vision to promote student success. Secondly, transformational leadership provides a platform for faculty to enhance their skills through professional development opportunities. Thirdly, transformational leadership provides role modeling for the CLS candidate transitioning from a world of academia to career development.

Burns's (2015) model of sustainable pedagogy incorporates best practices and theories for effective teacher sustainability especially in higher education settings. This newer model provides opportunities for transformative learning suggesting that learners are motivated and inspired to shift values and make authentic changes in their lives and their communities. The Burns model includes five dimensions that when woven together create opportunities for transformational learning with the potential to transform learners' attitudes and values (Burns, 2015). The five dimensions involve: content, perspectives, process, context, and design. The five dimensions provide the learner with opportunities

for understanding complex issues and promoting critical thinking along with active participation and experience with a connection to the community and lastly, the design of weaving in all the dimensions to create transformative learning experiences (Gray, 2015).

Leadership-focused coaching is a conceptual model postulated by Gray (2018) that involved mentoring workshops, professional development, and resources for mentors. Students were paired with an experienced mentor in the field according to this model to promote evidenced based practice, modeling of effective decision-making processes, planning activities in collaboration with practicum/internship supervisors and providing constructive feedback and evaluations. Gray encouraged students to gain practical experiences in the field to be more informed about their path to leadership practices. In a recent study, Posner (2016) investigated the reliability and validity of the Leadership Practices Inventory and confirmed the efficacy of both the Leadership Practice Inventory and the leadership challenge model supporting the benefits of the conceptual model of transformational leadership. Diaz et al. (2019) integrated the leadership model in law enforcement after its success in business and education proving its adaptability in other professions. Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practice Inventory has been used extensively in business and education, according to Watters (2019), whereby leaders engage in *Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership*, which include (a) modeling the way, (b) inspiring a shared vision, (c) challenging the process, (d) enabling others to act, and (e) encouraging the heart (Table 2). Kouzes and Posner (2002, 2009) used the concept of transformational leadership in their model, which is founded on the premise that exemplary leaders foster a culture in which relationships between aspiring

leaders and willing followers thrive. The transformational leadership concept embeds five principles as the “practices of exemplary leadership” (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, 2009).

Table 1

The Five Practices of Transformational Leadership and Exemplary Behaviors

Practice	Key behaviors
Model the way	Set the example to reflect the shared values. Achieve small wins to build confidence, commitment, and consistent progress.
Inspiring a shared vision	Envision a meaningful future by enlisting others in common values, interests, hopes, and dreams.
Challenge the process	Search out challenging opportunities to change, innovate and improve. Take risks and learn from any mistakes.
Enabling others to act	Foster collaboration through goals and trust building. Develop people’s ability by developing their competence and providing support.
Encourage the heart	Recognize contributions to success. Celebrate accomplishments regularly.

Additional research by Luyten and Bazo (2019), Allen (2018), and Glavic (2020) has supported the efficacy of transformational leadership in school settings for the past 20 years with student achievement being paramount when evaluating faculty and school performance. For more than 30 years of research, both qualitative and quantitative in nature, Kouzes and Posner developed the leadership challenge model and Leadership Practices Inventory to engage people in a variety of professions to develop leadership skills (Watters, 2019).

Relevance to the Study

The literature provided a variety of current challenges that faculty and students face compounded by the present dilemma in distance learning, healthcare restrictions surrounding the continuation of internship programs during the pandemic, and the financial strain on students during this unforeseen pause in their pursuit of child life certification. These challenges were an added layer of disillusionment that CLS candidates faced when seeking internships toward completion of their academic degree. While some local universities require internship completion before the official degree is granted, other local universities grant degree completion without internship incorporated into the academic program. This presented an obstacle for CLS candidates applying for internship when academic programs are not standardized. Both affiliated and unaffiliated university CLS candidates faced obstacles when seeking internships during pandemic restrictions on clinical experience which left CLS faculty unsure how to support CLS candidates toward success on their chosen career path. This research study was important to CLS faculty and CLS candidates because it examined the present situation in academic institutions according to faculty perceptions and the institutional support needed to move forward in the wake of the pandemic.

While leadership skills are necessary to implement the mechanics of planning, organization and control, leadership skills are also essential to create a motivating, visionary, and adaptable environment in which faculty and students can flourish. When leadership roles are integrated within institutional functions, innovative problem solving can be achieved that promotes social change benefiting faculty and CLS candidate

stakeholders. Strong faculty and student relationships exemplifies the foundation between objective organizational and individual development (Randall & Coakley, 2007). For example, when CLS faculty have the support from their respective institutions, they can effectively mentor CLS candidates toward success in seeking internships.

Using Kouzes and Posner's (2002, 2009) model can help institutional staff develop leadership abilities to tackle the challenges of faculty and education dilemmas. Kouzes and Posner's transformational leadership model illustrates how faculty can use leadership skills to inspire and support faculty with a view of promoting better mentoring. Kouzes and Posner (2009) focused on leader characteristics that include dignity and respect while fostering cooperation and modeling actions that align with the values of leadership. In education, a transformational leadership style helps educators motivate students to improve by empowering them to find solutions to problems through innovative ways.

Review of the Broader Problem

Overview of Topics

To support the purpose of this study regarding the perceptions of CLS faculty and the obstacles they faced in supporting CLS candidates seeking internships, I conducted an analysis of current research. Sections included in this literature review focus on relevant topics to adult education and strategies to create social change. Each section focuses on a related topic to facilitate change: transformational leadership in higher education, faculty leadership, student engagement, expectations in higher education, and supporting social change in clinical experience.

Search Strategy

The literature review was conducted using the medical library databases as well as Google scholar. The reference section of each article provided a wealth of related studies. The search terms used included, transformational leadership in higher education, conceptual frameworks that promote social change, and strategies for student success. Additional search terms were used such as “higher education,” “mentoring students,” “clinical experiences,” and “mentoring obstacles.”

Transformational Leadership in Higher Education

Transformational leadership in higher education was studied by Boamah et al. (2018), Buil et al. (2019), Nguyen et al. (2019), Nasra and Arar (2019, 2020), and Lai et al. (2020), whereby the effectiveness of transformational leadership was measured proving transformational leadership to be an effective approach in enhancing the performance in organizations since 1978. With the transformational leadership style supported by decades of research and having considerable impact in school settings, it is imperative that education leader training and development programs should educate and train in the application of the leadership style, according to Buil (2019). Transformational leaders share feedback with an emphasis on morals, communication, and authenticity (Ma & Marion, 2021). Moral educators are recognized as authentic role models, and students learn professionalism through educators who mentor with integrity by developing trust and respect from students. Transformational leadership celebrates the unique elements that make individuals different and has been reported to be more dynamic than its counterpart, direct leadership, which is more rigid with authoritarian

stance that kills student enthusiasm. Researchers Burns et al. (2019) postulated that educators are crucial to the learning process; however, educators need to be aware of the learners' attitudes, feelings, personalities, and preferences, and be ready to respond to these as necessary. Transformational learning depends on a trustful atmosphere. Building trust with faculty takes time, effort, and maturity on the part of the student and providing an opportunity for both a personal and professional growth.

Li et al. (2019) examined transformational leadership's impact in boosting innovative work behavior. Their findings demonstrated the significant impact of transformational leadership on trust in a leader and a positive impact on work engagement. This was a key study to investigate how empowerment positively influenced the relationship between transformational leadership and employee innovative work behavior. This framework can be interpreted in the higher education setting whereby faculty are leaders and students are learners. When educators maintain a high degree of professionalism through transformational leadership, they lead students by modeling trust and respect while building an atmosphere of innovation (Xie et al., 2018). Within higher education institutions, the development of competencies among students has become increasingly important in the last 15 years with a shift in focus from input-oriented teaching to a student-centered approach (Luyten & Bazo, 2019; Rieckmann, 2018). Therefore, building trust between leaders and learners is a critical first step to effective transformation in building the mentor-student relationship. Additionally, faculty are accountable through performance evaluations and increased expectations of university stakeholders (students), according to studies by Nasra and Arar (2020).

According to Buil et al. (2019) and Boamah et al. (2018), the role of identification, engagement and proactive personality through transformational leadership can be interpreted as increased educator satisfaction in mentoring and increased job satisfaction. This culture change is what educators who mentor students need to maintain an optimistic perspective for students who are transitioning from an academic environment to internships.

Faculty Leadership Facilitates Change

Studies by Ahmadi et al. (2020) and Ng (2017) suggested that mentoring relationships between faculty and students develop over time with a coordinated plan for student success and faculty engagement in leadership skills. Reinholz et al. (2017) created departmental action teams to support a more inclusive administrative structure to examine the need for leadership training. Transformative leadership was one such conceptual framework to empower educators to create change, according to Litz and Blaik-Hourani (2020). In studies by Lerdpornkulrat et al. (2018), institutional goals, student motivation, engagement, and persistence were examined for program success.

Conversely, the literature also addresses the many challenges on why mentoring relationships struggle. A study by Eby et al. (2008) indicated a lack of allocated time for faculty to successfully mentor their students as one outcome from the mentor's perspective. Additionally, this same study mentioned that a well-organized academic and clinical program was needed for students to succeed. Studies by Algozzini et al. (2018) and Wekullo (2019) examined barriers for leadership and student success identifying a lack of support and resources. Schnoes et al. (2018) and Silva et al. (2018) posited

increased faculty resources and support improved faculty performance and job satisfaction. One outcome is institutional leadership support that improves faculty engagement thereby considering all aspects of the student internship process from securing internships to accessing funding for internships to improve student financial well-being. With local funding available for students completing internship through work-study programs, faculty must facilitate this coordination of funding and work-study resources to lessen the financial burden on students by creating equitable internship opportunities for all students.

Student Engagement Facilitates Change

While students must adhere to strict guidelines for the internship application process as put forth by the ACLP (2020) as the professional association governing child life credentialing, faculty must be aware of and engaged in the child life profession to provide efficacious guidance. Academic faculty who lacks the appropriate knowledge in the clinical setting cannot adequately prepare students for internship opportunities. Lastly, students incur considerable financial expense when applying for several internship opportunities to increase their ability to receive a match. Rising application fees, acquiring official transcripts, and timely mailings add to the burden of maintaining student finances and psychological stress in anticipation of being selected as a candidate for internship.

Preparing students for real world experiences through clinical internships should be an expectation of higher learning candidates when applying for graduate programs. Too many academic institutions see the potential for the financial gain to the university

by onboarding students without a strategic plan for student transitions to the real world through practicum and internships. The benefits of an internship for students include gaining real world skills such as decision making-skills, critical-thinking skills, increased confidence, and self-esteem, as noted by Ahmadi et al. (2020). Students gain opportunity to transfer academic theory into practical experience. Additionally, internship candidates experience increased self-esteem when successfully matched with an internship site. Some students may receive academic credit for internship completion and as a bonus, a completed internship improves their marketability following graduation. The transformation from student into a career role has been the focus of many studies indicating greater work adaptability and job satisfaction, as reported by Lan and Chen (2020). As mentioned previously, Ahmadi et al. suggested that mentoring relationships develop over time which poses an initiative on both faculty and students. This is an investment of time, energy, and sharing personal goals, which are some of the attributes as described by Kahu and Nelson (2018) of successful students.

Ahmadi et al. (2020) clearly delineated a well-planned student curriculum becomes the driving force in preparing students for clinical experiences. With even greater clarity, Parent et al. (2016) indicated that an internship crisis has emerged from both a lack of internship matches for candidates and a lack of coordinated partnership efforts between academic and clinical settings. Internships have been further derailed by clinical training restrictions due to the pandemic. According to many strategic researchers, such as Silva et al. (2018) and Schnoes et al. (2018), clinical settings may experience a setback with fewer qualified candidates for internship and potential jobs

with clinical experiences halted temporarily due to the pandemic. Lastly, researchers report a variety of student barriers to completion of their professional pursuits, according to Hora et al. (2019) and Stone and O'Shea (2019), such as scheduling conflicts with work, insufficient pay, and lack of internship placements as barriers to academic completion and the retention and success of marginalized students.

Expectations in Higher Education

According to the ACLP (2020), healthcare institutions had to pause all practicum and internship opportunities until the country achieved herd immunity from COVID-19. This CDC advisement created pandemonium for displaced students trying to complete out-of-state practicum and internship experiences. Whether sheltering in place or navigating a way home created a financial burden and loss of career momentum. Some online academic programs quickly jumped to virtual clinical experiences for students which have created new ethical concerns according to HIPAA guidelines of protecting patient information and confidentiality. Virtual experience is an area that requires further research and validation before consideration as a valid substitution for actual hands-on clinical experience. The Child Life Certifying Commission (2020) published a position statement with expectations of educators to maintain a relevance in the field both academically and clinically through certification and adherence to the standards of professional practice. Sisk and Cantrell (2021) outlined the goals of graduate education for child life students that foster leadership and academic skills that support evidence-based practice, the continued emphasis on research on all levels, the preparation requirements of child life academic teachers, and time for research and professional

development. These goals form a strategic plan for the profession of child life by 2032 as well as creating a steppingstone for demystifying research for students (Sisk & Burn-Nader, 2020). In recent studies by Redmond et al. (2018) and Bond and Bedenlier (2019), student engagement through educational technology has provided cause for the development of a conceptual framework that addresses the validity of virtual opportunities both academically and clinically.

Baum and Steele (2017) studied student completion rates, acquired internships, and job placement, revealing the inequity of students who struggle financially who were forced to take any job to pay the bills. Further, Oliver and Jorre de St Jorre (2018) studied graduate attributes for 2020 and beyond. Students who were able to be flexible in the location of an internship opportunity and eventual job placement had a better chance of finding a placement. Similarly, Schnoes et al. (2018) described a well-developed strategic plan by students and faculty for internship completion prior to graduation provided the greatest support for students. This requires the leadership of faculty, according to Lo et al. (2018), to create an alliance with clinical instructors at internship institutions.

Parent et al. (2016) suggested a lack of coordination between universities and internship coordinators in clinical institutions and fewer internship matches for candidates were contributing factors to the internship availability crisis. Han et al. (2014) posited that students were not adequately prepared to be competitive candidates for internship. Sadly, many candidates who had to pause in the completion of practicum and internship experiences due to a pandemic and healthcare restrictions for clinical

experiences caused a financial strain on students and an overwhelming quandary for academic faculty overseeing internship candidates. Adding to the rising costs of higher education, Althiga et al. (2017) found that students would have to broaden their scope for internship experiences by having to relocate and as internships are typically unpaid; this creates a greater financial burden for the CLS candidate.

Supporting Social Change in Clinical Experience

With the many adaptations in healthcare from face-to-face interactions with patients to Zoom appointments and telehealth virtual assessments (Hah & Goldin, 2019), providers had to put a pause on direct clinical student experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the literature suggests that telehealth sessions have the potential to prepare care providers for health care delivery across space, time, social, and cultural barriers. Some institutions have even provided students with virtual practicums and internships to continue their clinical experiences (Bylander, 2018) with the recommendation that students get feedback from their preceptors. One proposed study outcome was that CLS candidates would be more likely to locate appropriate internships upon degree completion.

In a recent publication by the ACLP (Sisk & Wittenberg, 2021), the authors advocated for the support with equal weight of virtual versus face-to-face practicums in applicant consideration for internship to address the impact on the student-to-professional timeline due to COVID-19 pandemic and institution clinical restrictions. A study by Grady (2011) regarding the telehealth model in providing virtual clinical practicums provided evidence that technology-delivered education can augment existing curriculum

and provide the benefits of traditional learning enhanced by technology that is tailored to the specific needs of students. Conversely, the perceptions of students of online practicums and clinical experiences is not all favorable. Many students felt that online learning could provide active engagement in activities and problem-solving with support through a faculty online presence and the flexibility required to adapt to constantly changing technology (Wilcox & Lock, 2017). The challenge of continuing with higher education experiences during restrictive precautions in healthcare institutions due to the pandemic has cast a new light on virtual learning platforms (Blando-George, 2020; Fogg et al., 2020; Tantillo & Christopher, 2020) regarding the new normal after the transition from classroom to virtual learning, with a ratio of 3 clinical hours for every hour of lecture. Still, other studies by Lee et al. (2019), Mendez et al. (2020), Padilha et al. (2018), and Foronda et al. (2018) have examined a more gradual shift from classroom learning to simulation learning. Foronda et al. examined student preferences and perceptions for success using ySIM learning, which uses simulation with augmented reality. From a clinical statement regarding students and direct care clinical hours by the National Association of Nurse Practitioners (2020), students must have both direct care and virtual clinical hours before eligible for licensing.

Sisk and Wittenberg (2021) provided overwhelming evidence that the pandemic impact has not yet been felt by academic and healthcare institutions in terms of a reduction in practicum course enrollments and internship applicants due to the backlog in clinical opportunities, which will have ramifications in the eventual job market with fewer qualified individuals. As this phenomenon plays out and the competition rises for

internships and jobs, students may feel pressure to seek out opportunities beyond the requirements for internship, leading to a phase out for those students who cannot dedicate additional time to unpaid experience, therefore fueling the inequity of applicants with more experience for internship to those who must pursue paid work to survive (Sick & Wittenberg, 2021). Laurencin and McClinton (2020) further indicated disparities during the COVID-19 pandemic that are both racial and ethnic that may affect future job markets and academic enrollments if strategic planning for future health surprises does not become a priority.

There have been few changes over the past 50 years in the transformational leadership model proposed by Burns (1978) as scores of researchers have studied and tested this model and adapted it to promote a leadership framework across a variety of professions. Most importantly, the healthcare professions and higher education have benefited greatly through the ability to mentor and model the original conceptual framework of transformational leadership to bring about change that translates to greater job satisfaction (Litz & Blaik-Hourani, 2020; Silva, 2018) and a greater understanding of the role of exemplary leadership (Gray, 2015; Watters, 2019).

Implications

The conceptual framework for this study was Kouzes and Posner's (2019) transformative leadership model and was defined as a process whereby leaders are transformative role models who reinforce the professional growth of their mentees. CLS candidates require a range of support and faculty coaching resources during the internship application process through active engagement that is built upon a relationship of respect,

trust, and the leadership of their mentors. Based on the results of the research study, the study project addressed a faculty development program using the transformational leadership model. The faculty development program design was built upon faculty mentoring skills using training modules and scenarios based on the elements of exemplary leaders, according to Kouzes and Posner (2002). A faculty tool kit (Appendix A) provided faculty participants with a description of the elements of transformational leadership (Table 2); opportunities for role play as a mentor and a mentee (Appendix B); and a variety of resources and tip sheets for further learning.

The transformative leadership model provides five exemplary practices of leadership (Table 1) as described by Kouzes and Posner (2002, 2009) and applied to higher education by using the leadership development model for academic advisors. The conceptual model of transformative leadership was used to provide a framework for faculty mentors to support their advising practices with CLS candidates. For the purposes of this study, I focused on the five elements of Kouzes and Posner's model (Table 2) as an overarching andragogic theory and scaffolding for the project study concerning faculty leadership training to better prepare the CLS internship candidate for success. The transformative leadership model was used to inspire the task of locating, applying for, and securing an internship with the guidance of local CLS faculty and access to resources.

Table 2

The Five Elements of Exemplary Leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, 2009)

Modeling the way – Initially involves leaders developing self-awareness and examining and recognizing their personal and professional values. Once these are clarified, they can express their vision by synchronizing their behaviors with these values.

Inspiring a shared vision – Entails envisioning improvements and possibilities, then enlisting the team to share and participate in the aspirations.

Challenging the process – Requires leaders to search for opportunities, take the initiative, and experiment with new ideas and alternative systems.

Enabling others to act – Includes fostering collaboration, interaction, and trust. The resulting ‘enabling environment’ promotes choice, accountability, and power sharing.

Encouraging the heart – Means that others’ contributions are recognized, appreciated, and celebrated to develop community spirit and common goals.

The internship provides an opportunity for rich learning through orientation and acclimation to the healthcare environment that contributes to a foundation of evidenced-based practice and critical thinking skills (Black et al., 2015). Internship opportunities create a transformative learning experience by providing CLS candidates with an opportunity to observe their CLS mentors for acquiring clinical skills through modeling (Walsh et al., 2019). The project study provides a faculty tool kit to empower academic advisors with leadership resources to effectively support their students along their journey as CLS candidates. While faculty possess mentoring skills for student advisement, the faculty tool kit within the project study reinforces professional development through role play scenarios that supports successful skill development based on the transformative leadership model. The project study agenda reviewed the leadership

resources in the faculty tool kit (Appendix A) and provided opportunities for the active engagement of faculty participants to nurture the mastery of successful mentoring practices with CLS candidates.

Summary

Building relationships is the foundation between objective faculty development and individual student development (Randall & Coakley, 2007). Faculty must seek to earn the respect and trust from their students through keeping up to date with the changes in the profession and active engagement in clinical experience supervision. Section 1 addressed the problem in understanding the obstacles that CLS faculty faced in supporting CLS candidates seeking internships. This section provided a literature review with subheadings that included an alignment of conceptual models, a review of the broader problem, how faculty leadership facilitates change, how student engagement facilitates change, the expectations in higher education, and social change in clinical experience. The conceptual model of transformative leadership developed by Kouzes and Posner (2019) has made a significant contribution to the thinking on effective leadership with the design of the five practices of exemplary leadership, which has been applied to higher education to enhance leadership development in academic advisors and CLS faculty mentors. The conceptual model was used to provide CLS faculty with five leadership practices to enhance their guidance and supportive practices with CLS candidates. Section 2 describes the interview method used to interview CLS faculty for their perceptions on the challenges they faced in supporting CLS candidates seeking internships and the potential for institutional support. Section 3 addresses the project

study according to the results of the research study and the themes derived from the faculty interviews. The study project design provides a leadership tool kit for academic advisors and CLS faculty to develop higher education leadership skills according to the Kouzes and Posner model for exemplary leadership. A cornerstone of higher education is the continuous work being done to engage students by designing new teaching methods that integrate best practices and develop the teacher student relationship. The faculty development program provides continuing education for faculty who teach CLS candidates. Lastly, Section 4 includes comments, discussion, and a conclusion of study relevance and adaptability for further research. This section addresses the benefit of social change in higher education regarding faculty and student challenges for success.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the challenges CLS faculty faced when supporting CLS candidates seeking internships. I used a basic qualitative design to conduct individual audio recorded interviews with CLS faculty from local colleges. The data were analyzed for themes that emerged from the data in the research log and transcribed interviews.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

This study used a basic qualitative research design to understand the challenges CLS faculty faced in supporting CLS candidates in obtaining internships and the institutional support that is needed to alleviate those challenges. A basic qualitative research design is the best fit for this study to collect rich narrative data from the interviews. A purposefully selected sample of CLS faculty were interviewed to provide authentic sources of data for analysis, as noted by Patton (2002). In a basic design of qualitative research, the specific design is not identified (Creswell & Creswell-Baez, 2021). The basic design approach explored themes and how they might be interrelated (Creswell & Creswell-Baez, 2021). A basic research design is the best fit for this study because it allows for only one data source. The data source in this study was faculty interviews.

Other qualitative designs were considered for this research, including phenomenological, narrative, grounded theory, ethnographic, and case study designs. However, the basic design aligned with the single source of data from faculty interviews.

The focus of a phenomenological study is on a single phenomenon to explore. In narrative research, the focus is on a single individual (or more than one individual), and the data are from the individual stories. The researcher in a grounded theory study seeks to generate a theory to explain a process, action, or interaction. Ethnographic researchers seek to describe how cultural groups develop patterns in group actions, communication, or behaviors. Lastly, the idea behind case study research is to select a case (or several cases) and describe how the case illustrates a problem or an issue. This leads to an in-depth analysis of the case. A basic qualitative design is neither a portrayal of a cultural group or individual, a phenomenon, a case study, or a theory, therefore the basic qualitative design type was best fit for this research study to explore the themes embedded in CLS faculty interviews that were relevant to the challenges of helping CLS candidates seeking internship opportunities.

Participants

I conducted an internet search for local college faculty who teach child life coursework. I contacted local CLS faculty if they currently teach CLS candidates and mentor CLS candidates seeking internships. Faculty were emailed an invitation to participate in the research study and consent information with an explanation of the research study, the potential benefits of this study for faculty and CLS candidate stakeholders, and the 30-minute interview time involved if they choose to participate. Additional information regarding no compensation for participation, and the protection of participants' rights, and personal information was provided. When a CLS faculty member agreed to participate in the study, a research study disclosure to protect participant

privacy by numerical labeling of participants and their interview responses was provided. Additional demographic information was collected from each participant about their education, number of years of experience as CLS faculty, number of years of clinical experience as a certified CLS, and how long they have mentored CLS candidates. Participants were advised that their participation is strictly voluntary and of their ability to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants of this study included a minimum of 10 CLS faculty from local colleges who provide CLS coursework for CLS candidates who plan to seek internships at some point in their academic journey. The sample size for qualitative studies when using in-depth interviews is much smaller than used in quantitative research methods (Dworkin, 2012). And while there is much debate over sample size in qualitative studies regarding saturation of data, Creswell and Creswell-Baez (2021) suggested achieving a minimum sample size of 10-15 participants to reach saturation and redundancy using in-depth interviews. The sample size could have been adjusted to include more faculty if saturation had not been achieved during the in-depth interviews with a minimum of 10 CLS faculty. Participants were interviewed voluntarily for their perceptions and challenges with mentoring CLS candidates seeking internships.

Protection of Participants' Rights

When designing a research study, it is paramount that the researcher provides protection for the individual participants in the research (NIH, 2018). I completed training to understand and comply with all ethical standards, respect for study participants, and protection for human subjects in research (Appendix N). According to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), all participants in the study were voluntary and

informed of their right to decline further involvement at any time. Participants were provided with an overview of the study, the research questions, and information about how this study will make a contribution to the field by improving understanding of the challenges faculty face in supporting CLS candidates for internships. Participant personal demographic information was respected and privacy maintained to keep participant information anonymous. Participant interview data were transcribed and stored using a numerical code to keep participant identification anonymous and to remove any possibility of researcher bias.

Data Collection

Data collected in this study came from CLS faculty interviews via audio recorded phone sessions. The CLS faculty from local colleges were informed of the study and invited to participate following an explanation of the study, the potential benefits to the child life profession, educators of CLS coursework, and provided consent to be recorded in an interview. A letter of informed consent was provided to and collected from each faculty participant along with the interview protocol and potential investment of time for each faculty member interviewed in this study. The fact that no financial compensation was provided to participants was made clear at the initial invitation to participate in the study. Lastly, participants were informed of how data will be used, stored, and disposed of after 5 years.

Data Collection Instrument

I designed and formatted interview questions to reflect the research questions that included the perceptions of CLS faculty and the challenges they faced in supporting CLS

candidates seeking internships. The interview questions were aligned with the research questions (Table 3) to create a template for establishing a clear and concise objective interviewing to promote consistency for each faculty participant being interviewed. CLS faculty perceptions of institutional support data were collected from a minimum of 10 CLS faculty. Faculty perspectives were examined from the interview data obtained on the research log and audio recordings. Interviews concluded by asking CLS faculty if they had any additional comments about the degree of support and resources available to them from their respective institutions that would provide them with greater success in mentoring CLS candidates. Additionally, a final question invited any related comments they feel were relevant to the research study or beneficial to CLS candidates seeking internships.

Table 3

Alignment of Interview Questions to Research Questions

Interview questions	Research questions	
	RQ1	RQ2
a. How do you define your mentoring role with students?	X	
i. What guidance/support do you provide CLS students applying for internships?	X	
ii. Do students seek assistance freely or do they have an appointed advisor?	X	
b. What are some examples of how you provide guidance/support for CLS students applying for internships?	X	
i. What types of guidance/support do students seek?	X	
ii. Are you able to provide resources when guidance is beyond your scope of practice?	X	
c. What are your goals when mentoring CLS students?	X	
i. Do you find goal setting beneficial for students?	X	
d. In addition to your faculty appointment, do you have clinical experience with children in a healthcare setting?	X	
i. Are you currently practicing CLS in a healthcare setting in addition to your faculty position?	X	
ii. Describe your clinical experience/CLS role in a		

	healthcare setting?	X	
	iii. How has your clinical experience benefited your faculty role?	X	
e.	What is your perception of the importance of guidance/support for CLS students seeking internships?		X
	i. Do you have institutional resources available to support faculty in a mentoring role?		X
f.	What challenges have you encountered providing guidance/support to CLS students applying for internships?		X
	i. Does your academic institution provide you with the appropriate training for mentoring?		X
	ii. What resources do you require to provide mentoring for CLS students?		X
g.	What professional development training is important to you for maintaining your faculty responsibilities?		X
	i. How can faculty better support CLS students applying for internships?		X
	ii. What training would enhance your mentoring skills with CLS students?		X
	iii. Would your institution support mentoring training for faculty?		X

Collection of Data

Recorded interviews with CLS faculty were transcribed using a research log instead of qualitative study software such as Quirkos. Audio recordings of each interview captured word for word responses to the interview questions. The audio recordings were hand transcribed and the qualitative tool, Quirkos, provided open and axial coding to collate themes within the transcribed interviews. Open coding uncovered thematic responses that arose directly from the interviews. The use of automated coding software such as Quirkos saved time and additional effort in analyzing data. A research log was used to keep track of coded data with notations on coded dates, labels, descriptions, and codes arranged in themes. Grouping codes to form themes helped to create a hierarchical structure. Only one interviewer was used in this study to keep interview data reliable and

accurate in the collection process. A research log helped keep data clear, concise, and consistent.

Data Management

Data management tools such as Quirkos help to code, sort, and analyze data for themes and patterns in responses. The advantages of using a data software tool were evident in saving time and increasing efficiency by sorting data for themes (Beddall-Hill et al., 2011). The use of a data management tool such as Quirkos was recommended in basic qualitative design if the sample size has 10-15 participants with interviews. The data management tool of Quirkos was used for organization of the data during the process of analysis and can provide a clear coding and sorting structure to help create themes and patterns (Beddall-Hill et al., 2011). Although coding does not need to follow a chronological procedure (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019), I provided notes in the margin of the interview transcripts and research log to create highlighted descriptive themes in open coding. Following a long list of descriptive coded themes, I used axial coding for a higher level of coded themes from the interviews. The themes were further examined for repetition in faculty responses and categorized by significance. Reoccurring themes and repetition in participant interview question responses indicated saturation of data within the sample size. I found a discrepant case within the interviews that included a greater variety in faculty perceptions. The sample size of CLS faculty was adjusted as saturation occurred in the tenth interview. Data were stored in a file on my desktop computer and via a hard copy in a filing cabinet only accessible to me. All data files will be destroyed

after a period of 5 years following completion of the research study according to IRB guidelines.

Procedure for Gaining Access to Participants

Local CLS faculty educators were discovered using internet access to local college and university faculty who teach child life coursework and their contact information was obtained as potential study participants when granted approval by the IRB. I am not familiar with many of the faculty who teach child life coursework locally; however, I have heard of them and hoped to someday have a working relationship with them. I disclosed any personal or professional bias to the faculty participants prior to study participation. As a faculty educator myself in both clinical and academic settings, research studies are a natural way of collecting useful data to provide valuable needs assessment information that may become the focus of future collaborative projects such as position statements, academic program modification, and clinical experiences for CLS candidates.

Role of the Researcher

As the principal investigator for this study, I used personal and professional objectivity to maintain the integrity of the research. Personal bias and researcher subjectivity were minimized by assigning numbers to each of the faculty participants when recording their comments in the research log. This numbering system alleviated any subconscious association between faculty members and their interview comments. There was the potential to capture discrepant case data, which contributed to diverse and elaborate information from the faculty interviews. Discrepant case data were both

relevant and authentic, which provided a representation among a homogeneous sample of local CLS faculty who mentor CLS candidates seeking internships. I followed qualitative research steps in gathering data through audio recorded interviewing and transcription of data to provide an opportunity for multiple data checking points and clarification.

Reducing personal or professional bias was achieved by developing researcher competence and confidence in interviewing faculty members by duplicating all interviewing variables for each faculty participant. I acknowledged any conflict of interest at the beginning of each interview by defining the research study and describing the study stakeholders. This helped neutralize any preconceived notions of researcher bias for faculty participants.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis steps were used to prepare and organize data, print interview transcripts and researcher notes, and examine all data to create codes that were revised into themes and then presented as the study findings. I conducted faculty interviews that were audio recorded and transcribed in a research log. Additionally, I conducted a content analysis to sift through the descriptive information collected from faculty interviews. When the interviews were transcribed, I examined the data to detect possible codes and themes in the faculty interviews. Interviews were transcribed manually and checked against audio recordings for accuracy. Data were coded and uploaded to a software program for qualitative data from Quirkos. This program used open and axial coding to help identify themes within the data from the repetition in interview responses. Following qualitative research method steps in collecting and

analyzing data, and then presenting the findings adds credibility, dependability, transferability, and integrity to the research. Peer-review was invited by academic and clinical colleagues to examine the data for potential codes or themes that I may have missed. The peer-review adds an additional layer of quality to the data analysis.

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant cases were cases that differ from the majority of data themes collected and provide valuable information about unique CLS faculty perceptions. During the data analysis process, one discrepant case emerged in the form of irregular codes and themes in the research log and interview transcriptions. This information created a deeper understanding of the challenges that CLS faculty faced in supporting CLS candidates.

Evidence of Quality

Evidence of the quality of the research study was reflected in the depth, richness, and appropriateness of the data that when the data was analyzed, and the research questions were answered. This research study required critical reflection and justification of the transformational leadership framework. The quality of this study was reflected in the clear and justified research questions which aimed to explore faculty perceptions of the challenges with and institutional support for CLS candidates which implied the study was relevant, timely, original, and rigorous. Additionally, the criteria for evaluating the trustworthiness of qualitative research focused on the credibility of the research findings and the alignment of research steps, the dependability of the study in terms of being replicated, confirmability in the relationship between the data and the findings, and the transferability of the study to other settings or disciplines. Lastly, reflexivity was

explained through my role as the researcher throughout the study to increase transparency and trustworthiness of the research findings. I examined all themes and provided concluding remarks that focused on social change in response to the challenges of faculty and opportunities for CLS candidates seeking internships.

Limitations

The results of this study benefits both CLS faculty and CLS candidates seeking internships. The study provides a body of data about the perceptions of CLS faculty and the obstacles they faced when supporting students preparing for their clinical internships.

The study outcome was limited due to sample size. With a larger sample of participants, a greater body of data may have provided additional information. I was not a limitation of the study due to my internet search for child life faculty which provided access to the sample of participants with whom I had no prior professional relationship with. Participants would not have provided authentic data if they felt their identities may be known. Participants were reassured that their information was kept confidential, and their participation remained anonymous due to a numerical assignment to each interview.

Summary of Outcomes

The data analysis in this study aimed to reveal themes in CLS faculty perceptions that were further evaluated to address the faculty development tool kit project. The themes were important component in the discussion section and provided a curriculum focus for faculty development. The project included a faculty tool kit with scenarios requiring active participant in role playing that addressed the mentoring role of faculty according to the elements of Kouzes and Posners' (2002) transformational leadership

model. Three themes from participant data were addressed in the faculty development tool kit project. Additional themes emerged from study participants were not addressed in the faculty tool kit due to the complexity of their content and focus.

Data Analysis Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to better understand the challenges CLS faculty faced in supporting CLS candidates seeking internships, gather faculty perceptions to identify the obstacles, and explore institutional resources that might alleviate the challenges in supporting CLS faculty in their mentoring role. For study results to impact social change, data analysis was performed to align with the goals of the study and answer the research questions. A manual inductive thematic analysis comparing interview data from each of the study participants. This allowed for the evolution of codes, categories, and themes to better answer the research questions. Data coding and categories were further analyzed by the Quirkos analysis data tool for validation and accuracy of manual data analysis. A total of ten interviews were analyzed with the final two interviews providing data saturation by repetitive and recurrent answers to interview questions.

Data Analysis

Several themes emerged from the interview data and of those themes, the research questions were answered. The research questions addressed faculty perceptions of their challenges in supporting CLS candidates and what institutional support could help alleviate those challenges. Faculty eagerly shared their challenges and provided suggestions for support from their respective institutions. The challenges faculty face in

supporting internship candidates included: The necessity of clinical experience in teaching child life coursework; inconsistencies in ACLP requirements create confusion for students; disparities exist in the internship application process among hospitals; inequity in internship applicants do not match hospital populations served; faculty advisement of student income opportunities during internship; and lastly, faculty resources to support child life students during internship that offset the financial burden. The faculty interviews further revealed a need for institutional support by providing leadership training and adequate advisement time to properly address child life student goals and challenges. Additional faculty requests included: training to enable a more thorough assessment of students prior to program admission; faculty training in difficult conversations with students about academic and clinical progress; and funding resources for students completing internship while matriculated in the program. The themes that emerged from the data collection and transcriptions of the participant interviews are further described as the research findings and addressed as themes.

Research Findings

The themes that emerged from the faculty participant interview data helped to answer the research questions. Themes 1 – 4 described the challenges and obstacles that faculty face when supporting CLS candidates. Themes 5 – 6 describes the types of institutional support needed for faculty to provide CLS candidate support. The themes are further described in more detail with faculty participant direct comments.

Theme 1: Current clinical experience is essential in teaching child life coursework

Each of the faculty participants described their faculty and clinical CCLS assignments in detail except for one study participant who had recently dissolved her clinical assignment yet retained an adjunct faculty position. Many of the study respondents described the importance of providing students with practical experience stories. Such practical experience stories are remembered and impactful for students. Study participants recommended that faculty should also supervise their students in the clinical setting to provide observation experiences and promote student confidence that reinforces the fact that CLS candidates possess what the hospitalized child needs developmentally and psychosocially. Additionally, one faculty participant stated the following, “We are better advisors when we keep up to date with the changes in professional standards in healthcare.” This statement validates the relevance of maintaining clinical assignments while teaching child life coursework and sharing the most up to date clinical requirements. Another faculty participant stated, “Faculty aligned with a comprehensive child life degree program claim greater diligence in helping students navigate the academic and clinical progress.” This comment seemed fair coming from faculty who had a frame of reference from a comprehensive child life degree program. The same faculty participant suggested, “Students from a comprehensive academic program who have an assigned academic advisor were said to have a better experience in their journey toward the child life profession and their advisors were more diligent in helping students navigate the clinical process.” This faculty comment should epitomize the intended goal with all students.

Theme 2: Changes and Inconsistencies in ACLP requirements create confusion for students

Several faculty participants mentioned that students reported being frustrated and confused by the many changes and inconsistencies of the Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) which govern the standards of clinical practice and assess accreditation of both academic and clinical internship settings for content and relevance in field. The ACLP recently changed internship application deadline dates for child life internship processing to March 15 which only benefited ACLP as the original May 5 application deadline conflicted with the National ACLP conference date making the student verification process for practicum, coursework, and eligibility assessment difficult to process. This deadline date change served only to benefit the ACLP without regard for child life program workload following the prior January 5 application deadline, application review, interview and offer dates. A process that is both time intensive for students and CCLS in healthcare settings. Additionally, ACLP proposed the requirement of a master's degree to enter the child life field and then years later, revoked the requirement after students had invested more time and financial resources to attain a master's degree for entry to the profession. These changes and inconsistencies have created confusion for faculty to provide appropriate advisement for students coupled with student frustration with limited time and resources to attain the requirements to enter the field. Many students have added student debt through educational loans and may be overqualified for entry level CCLS positions.

Theme 3: Disparities exist in the internship application process among hospitals

Many hospitals do not adhere to the ACLP recommendations or requirements for the internship application process. Some differences among hospital settings are due to alignment to hospital policy and procedures for onboarding interns while other differences pertain to the subjective preferences of individual child life programs. These differences include whether official or unofficial transcripts are required, and if actual letters of recommendations or the ACLP checklist is required. Additionally, some students feel more is better when it comes to completion of their application packet. They may provide both letters of recommendation and the practicum supervisor checklists, they may add verification forms for every child life course taken or just those required to be taught by a CCLS. Students often fail at providing solid narrative essays required within the common application and concentrate more on providing additional documentation that doesn't necessarily describe a well-rounded internship applicant. ACLP should provide institutional guidelines that streamline the application process by standardizing the requirements. Unfortunately, a few faculty participants described their reservation about referring students to the ACLP website because it was potentially overwhelming and difficult to navigate.

Students who are no longer affiliated with an academic program often request guidance from faculty of comprehensive child life academic programs who have limited time to properly guide nonmatriculated students. One faculty participant stated, "We pace students with their application completion by incorporating sections of the application into coursework assignments." This statement was a common faculty response to how

faculty guide students and a need to break down the big picture into smaller parts to reduce student anxiety.

Theme 4: Inequity in internship applicants do not match hospital populations served

As both a CCLS and Internship Coordinator, I have experienced firsthand the inequity among internship applicants. It has been a field predominantly composed of students from four-year colleges and universities who have the resources to complete the internship application process which can range from \$200.00 to \$1,000.00 according to ACLP certification guidelines, depending on the number of hospitals the student is applying to. Once an intern has been accepted, the internship lasts approximately 15 weeks without pay and if displaced from the students' hometown, they must rent an apartment, and cover their living expenses and transportation costs during their internship. Students often do not have a side job during this time because of the changing shift schedules that students encounter in each internship rotation area. Students can easily become frustrated with the number of times they must apply for internship after a rejection due to fewer internship opportunities compared to the disproportionate number of applicants each semester. An average ratio of applicants to internship positions is approximately 70:2 per semester from one hospital program. One faculty member stated, "We are not adequately trained in how best to support student disappointment from internship rejection."

Additionally, hospital patient populations are a cross representation of the community they serve. However, many CLS students are forced to apply outside of their hometown or geographic preference area and their cultural background may not represent

the hospital population being served. This is a growing problem for hospitals as healthcare employees represent a predominantly female environment which does not represent the male pediatric patients well. There are disparities inherent in the healthcare setting but as child life professionals we need to work harder to be more inclusive in our representation of greater cultural and gender diversity within the profession. This is an area of social change that the profession of child life would benefit greatly from.

Theme 5: Faculty advisement of student income opportunities during internship

Faculty advisement was a repeated comment in the participant interviews. A chief complaint was a lack of allocated time to adequately advise students about the internship application process and goal setting was an important advisement responsibility to help students break down the big picture into smaller steps. Students required having goals broken down into smaller attainable parts to lessen stress and make the process more manageable. Faculty advising was perceived to be more time intensive than teaching especially when students required counseling beyond the scope of child life academic advisement and referral was necessary to campus counseling or other resources. One faculty participant reported, “Students felt stressed and challenged by the financial investment involved in the internship application process and in completing internship.”

Several faculty participants reported that they encouraged students to apply for the ACLP diversity scholarships, helping students explore financial aid work-study funding, and assisting students with applications for a graduate assistant (GA) position to offset the loss of income during internship completion. These are all excellent resources without a magic wand to automatically apply them to individual student needs.

Some of the adjunct faculty participants suggested not being assigned advisement responsibilities however, they were receptive to answering student questions before and after class as time allowed. One faculty participant used a child life academic program orientation to provide an overview for students along with a prepared binder outlining the entire academic and clinical process from orientation to coursework, application for internship, and the steps to attain certification as a certified child life specialist (CCLS). One faculty participant reported, “Some courses were embedded with sections of the internship application to be completed for peer review, and an opportunity to participate in mock interviews facilitated by current child life interns from their respective college of university.” This statement was refreshing to hear the creativity behind the curriculum.

Theme 6: The necessity of adequate faculty resources to support child life students

Advisement of CLS students took on many forms from fulfilling student requests for letters of recommendation to be included in their internship application packet to helping first generation and international students understand the internship application process. Having campus resources such as a writing center for students struggling with their writing skills and campus counseling services for students who were dealing with anxiety, stress, and fatigue, to health services for students testing COVID+ in the middle of their semester. Faculty reported a genuine need for formal training in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as well as, how to support their LGBTQ student population. Most importantly, faculty participants requested formal training in how to support students dealing with mental health issues either because of the pandemic or simply due to the highly competitive nature of securing a child life internship.

Adequate time for student advising was unanimously reported as a challenging obstacle to providing accurate and timely information for students at all stages of their academic and clinical journey toward internship.

The six themes that emerged from the faculty interviews provided a scaffolding and framework for the design of the project which became the faculty tool kit with resources and leadership training for CLS faculty. A three-day training was designed to address faculty challenges with supportive resources that included leadership enhancement activities, resources for student funding during internship, student assessment forms to ensure skill competency, and mentor/mentee evaluation tools for constructive feedback and professional growth.

Section 3: The Project

Project Description

The project was developed from the results of the study to address the perceptions of faculty and the challenges they faced when mentoring CLS candidates toward internship. The themes from the data analysis provided the need for support, expanded faculty resources, clarification of the ACLP application process, support for student financial difficulties during internship, and embedding coursework with check points for application completion. Time management and resources for leadership support were additional themes addressed through the faculty tool kit (Appendix M). Although the study data revealed additional themes for further exploration to support faculty, several themes were not addressed in the tool kit and faculty development training because of their complexity and depth of content such as, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, LGBTQ Sensitivity, and Difficult Conversations. Such themes are important for faculty skill building and allow individuals with greater authority to address and support faculty training on these topics. Using the transformational leadership model, the data analysis component of this study has produced faculty challenge themes that have provided the goals of the project. Each of the goals will be addressed through one of the five elements of the transformational leadership model.

The goals of the Faculty Tool Kit:

- Introduce a mentoring timeline through a step-by-step model that incorporates the five components of the transformational leadership model.
- Provide faculty resources for student financial concerns during internship.

- Explore assessment tools for early detection of student goodness of fit in pursuing a child life degree and career.
- Use a self-evaluation tool for faculty addressing mentoring skill competency and development.
- Use a mentor evaluation tool for student feedback to mentors.

The learning outcomes of the Faculty Tool Kit:

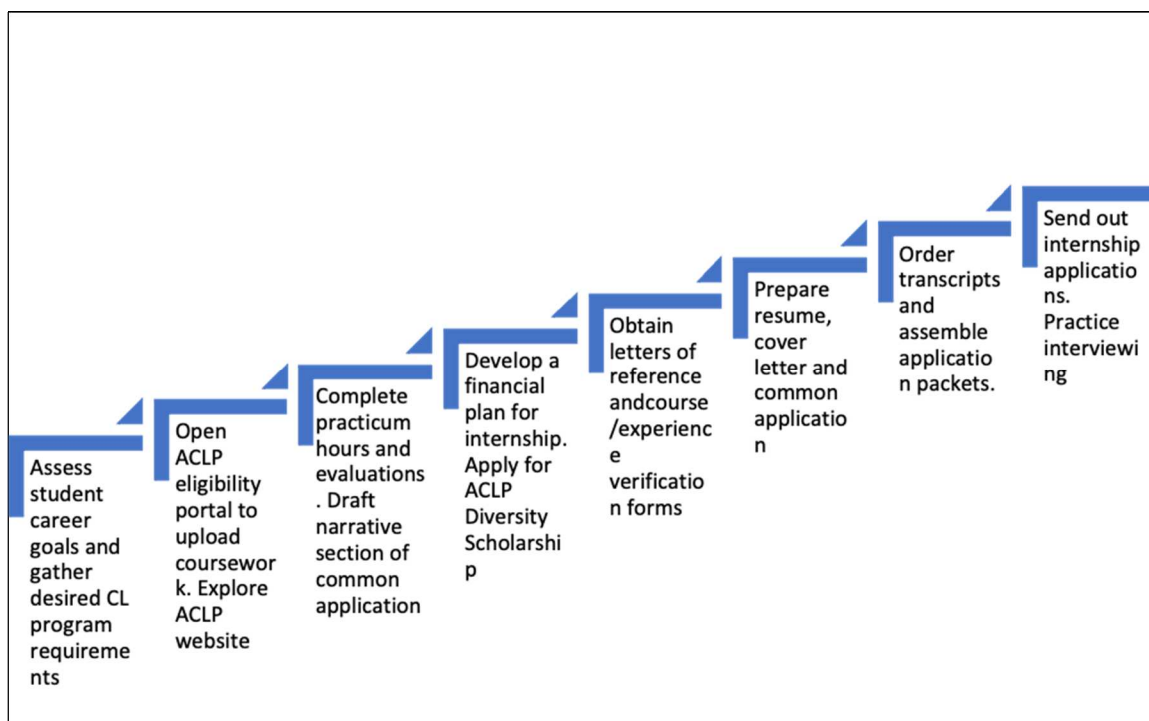
- Faculty will develop a step-by-step plan for mentoring CLS candidates toward internships from a provided model.
- Faculty will explore resources to help students explore financial support options during internship.
- Faculty will gain a better understanding of how an initial interview and assessment of student skills and competencies can provide early detection of goodness of fit for students pursuing a degree and career in child life.
- Faculty will gain a better understanding of the importance of the mentoring role and the competency skill building opportunities mentoring provides from the use of the self-assessment tool.
- Faculty will gain an understanding from student feedback addressing the effectiveness of their mentoring skills

Introduction

Based on the results of the research study, I designed a faculty development workshop entitled “Faculty Tool Kit” (Appendix M). This kit enables faculty to shape and/or sharpen their mentoring skills using the five training modules based on the

transformational leadership model with scenarios that include the following elements: modeling the way; inspiring a shared vision; challenge the process; enabling others to act; and encourage the heart. These components will be incorporated into the mentoring timeline (Figure 1) to provide faculty clarity in understanding the importance of mentoring students through these steps toward achieving their academic and clinical goals. Additionally, faculty are provided the opportunity to gain new skills to enhance their mentoring competency.

Figure 1 *Mentoring Timeline*



Rationale

Based on the themes that emerged from the data, the mentoring tool kit was created to address faculty concerns and perceptions with mentoring CLS candidates toward success in seeking internships. The faculty tool kit provides workshop modules to enhance faculty skill development on a variety of levels in an orderly progression. The elements of transformational leadership were introduced through module information in an individually paced program and then put into practice as faculty employ learned skills when mentoring CLS candidates on their journey to internship attainment and career success.

When academic departments offer or require module participation, the training can help change the culture of the department, the perception of faculty, and student satisfaction. Adoption of mentoring skill building for faculty is a viable and strategic plan to successfully mentor students on their academic and professional journey, and the academic program becomes more comprehensive in what it offers both students and faculty on the learning continuum. The faculty tool kit provides a valuable competency training tool for measuring faculty mentoring skills and standardizes the attainment of mentoring skills within the academic department.

Review of Literature

Kouzes and Posner's (2007, 2009) model of transformational leadership provided a foundational approach to attaining leadership qualities important in leading others to success while contributing to a variety of skills that are transferable to a variety of professions. Academic leadership requires the ability to critically synthesize the depth

and breadth of subject matter, share information and engage students both within the classroom and in a mentoring capacity to counsel students toward success. The Faculty Tool Kit Workshop focused on faculty skill development that addressed the five elements of transformational leadership. The first module addressed the leadership element of *Modeling the Way*. The second module addressed the leadership element of *Inspire a Shared Vision*, the third module addressed the element of *Challenge the Process*, the fourth module addressed the element of *Enabling Others to Act*, and the fifth module focused on the leadership element of *Encourage the Heart*.

To find relevant and current studies to guide the development of the study project, a literature review was conducted using the Walden University Library and Google Scholar. The reference section of each article was reviewed for related studies and Google Scholar was used for navigating references cited in the articles. Search terms also used for the project study literature review included “mentoring students,” “mentoring skills,” “mentoring challenges,” “mentoring resources,” and “developing mentoring programs.”

For the purposes of the study project, mentoring is defined as a structured and trusting relationship between CLS faculty and CLS students that is enhanced through guidance, support, and encouragement aimed to develop the confidence and skills of the mentee. In Section 1, the literature presented described Kouzes and Posner’s (2007, 2009) model of transformational leadership and the importance of providing students with faculty leadership during mentoring that promotes student goal setting and independence. The five components of transformational leadership described in this

model address the following: the need for faculty to be a role model for the profession; the need to demonstrate professional skills; the need to explain the path for students to achieve their goals; the need for faculty to model behaviors for success such as how to overcome challenges along the way, collaborate with peers for professional networking; and lastly, to celebrate student successes. In Section 3, the literature review supports the faculty tool kit goals to enhance faculty mentoring skill development through self-paced learning modules. The learning modules address faculty challenges identified by the study participants and the faculty skill development areas emerged from analysis of the interview responses. Lastly, the faculty tool kit provides resource information links to support faculty in their mentoring role with students.

Kouzes and Posner's (2007, 2009) transformational leadership model components are appropriately applied to the study outcomes to address the faculty identified obstacles. Faculty obstacles that impede the mentoring process of CLS candidates applying for internship were repeatedly identified by faculty during participant interviews. Faculty addressed the challenge of providing students with ample coaching time given the complexity each student's needs and the time constraints in faculty advising schedules. Additionally, Grites (2013) identified the concept of developmental academic advising to provide goal oriented coaching sessions. Students who enter a child life academic program without the qualities of compassion, patience, and respect for persons that are necessary for their career choice upon graduation may have trouble in securing an internship placement. This obstacle could be avoided by academic advisors using career assessment tools before encouraging a student to invest time and resources

in preparation for a career that is not the best fit for them. Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2012) named three common purposes of advising: engaging students in reflective conversations about educational goals; teaching students about the nature of higher education; and provoking student change toward greater levels of self-awareness and responsibility. Lastly, a lack of student funding during internship was reported by CLS faculty suggesting interns were unable to hold a job during this time, creating a prohibitive challenge for many students to fulfill the internship component that leads them to professional certification and necessary for job entry. There were several challenges identified by faculty participants in this study beyond the three chief challenges documented in this section. Faculty came from a variety of backgrounds, some with extensive child life clinical experience and some with greater managerial experience than clinical experience. Faculty touched upon the need for greater flexibility in how they mentor CLS candidates during individual meetings, small or large groups, on and off campus, and depending on an allotment of time in their schedules. Some faculty have incorporated student completion of sections of the internship application packet into their courses, including resume writing, application essays, and developing a spreadsheet for the individual requirements of each hospital they plan on applying to. CLS candidates have even had opportunities to practice their interviewing skills with child life alumnae and ask questions about internship expectations. Many students prefer to stay local for internship placement to trim living expenses during the 15-week internship; however, CLS candidates have greater success with placement when applying for internship in other than their home states.

To address the three chief challenges identified from faculty interviews, the transformational leadership components apply to how faculty nurtured CLS candidates by: clarifying the path to achieving their goals; faculty modeled behaviors for success; exploring with students how to overcome challenges along the way; promoting professional networking by collaborating with peers; and celebrating successes. Faculty need to provide a thorough orientation to the child life academic program that clarifies the path to achieving student goals. Faculty can model behaviors for success and provide student assessments early in their journey to identify if students are the best fit for a career as a CLS before much time is invested. Lastly, faculty can help students explore creative funding such as federal work-study programs to help subsidize student living expenses during internship and/or suggest on-campus paid opportunities such as being a graduate assistant when internship completion is part of fulfillment of the academic degree program. Faculty identified opportunities for students to network with other CCLS and CLS alumnae by holding mock interviews facilitated by present intern alumnae. Celebrating successes seemed to be a universal expectation of faculty as well as a self-described trait of faculty members who defined their role as student cheerleader, advocate, and coach from the very beginning to the point of the students' professional career and beyond.

The role of academic advising is often vague, and faculty who advise their students on a path toward success have a difficult time defining what and how they mentor students. To add to the ambiguity, advising within and between academic institutions vary greatly. Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2010) defined advising as

encompassing the student's academic goals and personal responsibilities as well as development of self-awareness within the framework of higher education. Understanding the unique goals and complexity of the child life profession, it is important for CLS faculty to focus on developing responsible and self-aware students who are critical thinkers who author their own path. This self-authorship is accomplished by challenging students to think for themselves by developing decision-making skills, providing opportunities for reflection, and supporting their goals (Baxter et al., 2008). Using a learning-centered approach for mentoring students, faculty address the big picture by breaking it down into smaller pieces and creating strategies for students to develop their critical thinking and decision-making skills. The foundation of a learning-centered approach was based on the ideas of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky.

Students attend higher education for a variety of reasons, both personal and professional. CLS faculty have the unique role in helping to refine student skills that contribute to citizenship, prepare for a professional field, and gain knowledge to help them lead a fulfilling life. These skills include decision making, critical thinking, and the ability to take ownership, and responsibility for their own actions. CLS faculty are tasked with supporting students in the development of these key competencies through challenge or conflict. When CLS faculty share personal stories about their own career path, students are enlightened, and empowered from stories of success. CLS faculty may also use student narrative stories to support skill development and enhance understanding about individual perspectives and knowledge (Himes, 2014). Unlike some occupations, aptitude tests are not required to enter a higher education path to study child life coursework.

Because of the appeal of studying child development and using this knowledge in the healthcare environment as a child life specialist, students may be blinded by what is required to complete this path toward certification in the profession. Experience with both typically developing children and hospitalized children is necessary, as well as completion of all coursework with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Fieldwork hours and a practicum prepare the student for what may be involved in the 600-hour internship. The internship is unpaid for 15 weeks which can present a financial strain for most students. Additionally, physical agility is important to be able to move from a kneeling or sitting position, to a standing position with a small child in your arms. Good communication skills and compassion for all families regardless of race, religion, or background is crucial to provide impartial support and advocacy for patients and their families.

With the addition of eLearning opportunities for students and the emergence of virtual practicum and internship completion during a pandemic has contributed to a healthy debate among professionals. A new generation of college students are well versed in technology use and adapt easily to virtual experiences (Jeske & Axtell, 2018b; Bayerlein & Jeske, 2018; Jeske, 2019; Jeske & Linehan, 2020;). The very notion of eLearning rather than hands on experience is highly debated as adequate preparation for the actual clinical work environment (Bhattacharya & Neelam, 2018). Researchers have documented advantages and disadvantages with eLearning (Dumford & Miller, 2019) whereby, the advantages create adaptable opportunities during unprecedented times and circumstances, as well as provide qualified candidates to meet work demands. The disadvantages of eLearning are the lack of social contact, and the opportunity to engage

with academic cohorts or development meaningful relationships with mentors. According to MacQueen and Aiken (2019); and Kapareliotis, Voutsina, and Patsiotis (2019), internship experiences prepare students for entering the work force from real life learning opportunities that support job readiness.

eLearning extends into the realm of mentoring whereby; students have greater access to their mentors when conducted via Zoom. There are benefits to this type of mentoring in addition to access. eMentoring transcends geographic barriers for international students (Chand & Deshmukh, 2019) who have an opportunity to be mentored from a distance during a pandemic (Haran & Jeyaraj, 2019; Briscoe, 2019; and Cobb, et al., 2018). Similarly, Garcia-Melgar and Meyers (2020) studied the expansion of the mentoring role through eMentoring opportunities to help students overcome barriers of distance.

Good mentors who prepare students for internship are facilitating the transition from classroom to career according to Bilslund, Carter, and Wood (2019); Attri and Kushwaha (2018), depending on how supportive the mentoring and the students' relationship with their mentor (Kramer-Simpson 2018; Clark, Harden, & Johnson, 2000; and Palmer, 2019). In a study by Black and Taylor (2018), they reported the mentor relationship to be influential in the success of student career goals. Mentors can address a first-generation student need for identity with attention to their individual needs, and their perspective of mentoring according to Anderson and West (2020). These students are often in the process of developing their personal and social identities according to a study supported by Robnett, Chemers, and Zurbriggen (2015).

Mentoring has been proven effective and not simply confined to business, healthcare, or STEM careers. According to Neelem (2019) transfers within organizations are facilitated by mentors and employers gravitate to promote from within when candidates have interned with the same organization (Griffin & Coelhoso, 2019; and Hamori, 2019). In a literature review by Simpson and Bouhafa (2020), STEM students rely on internship opportunities to secure a potential career with a company. Winterer, et al. (2020), Estrada, Hernandez, and Schultz (2018), have looked at STEM internships as preparation for transition to careers, along with advocacy for the inclusion of underrepresented minorities. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is an important narrative for organization effectiveness, and it is important to have a cross representation of employees who serve a population of the same client. Embracing DEI is good business sense and addresses intersectionality (Atkins, 2020; Domingo et al., 2019; Byars-Winston & Rogers, 2019). STEM career preparation much like healthcare jobs must represent the populations served by supporting the mentoring process with opportunities for students of all backgrounds (Fries-Britt & White-Lewis, 2020; Atkins, et al., 2020; Ciocca & DiPrete, 2018; Mondisa & McComb, 2018; and Butz, et al., 2018).

Jacobson (2022) acknowledged three important factors that have become a deterrent from securing an internship in healthcare. These factors include the cost of internship which refers to the four months of unpaid internship work necessary for child life certification and their career. Another factor refers to the lack of diversity in the field of professionals who are serving populations of diverse individuals. Underrepresented student populations must have a place in healthcare to address the needs of healthcare

clientele. And lastly, the changing requirements of our overarching professional association must address a better way to represent the child life professionals, and the programs they support. Jacobson (2022) noted that the lack of internship positions across the nation and the growing number of qualified candidates competing for the decreased number of internships available has strained the process. This alone creates an accumulation of staled candidates who are unable to start their careers until an internship is secured. Such factors have created a gap in the field that widens with each semester of graduating child life internship candidates.

The study results have revealed some of the very factors mentioned in the Jacobson publication (2022) and further demonstrates the perspectives of the child life faculty participants. Faculty are frustrated by the changes in internship requirements and the inconsistencies in our professional leadership that should support our work mentoring students. The transcribed interview data when analyzed for themes, revealed repetitive faculty perceptions that further validated the study design and research questions. Conceptual design and theme analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2021), help the researcher navigate through the volume of data to create an inductive approach to answering the research questions. A study by Sharp and Sanders (2020), supported the thematic analysis in a qualitative research study.

As theories grow and change, CLS faculty advising is part of that changing landscape that must grow and change to support the diverse goals of students. The themes that emerge from current theories in advising include the development of skills, a focus on the process of learning, and the importance of the narrative. CLS faculty face many

challenges in supporting CLS candidates as they prepare for internship from counseling students through disappointment when internship is not attained, or not being the best fit for the profession to finding funding sources during the four-month internship without pay and having time in their schedule to adequately advise students in higher education child life programs. These challenges will be addressed in the project through a faculty tool kit that uses transformational leadership to support faculty in their development of mentoring competencies.

Module 1: Modeling the Way

The first module of the faculty tool kit (Figure 1) involves the process of mentoring CLS candidates toward internship and illustrates how the bigger picture can be broken down into smaller more attainable parts. Many of these smaller steps can be embedded into coursework or developed as goals during faculty advisement meetings. Modeling the way is an important element in providing leadership through faculty advising by sharing with students that faculty fully understand the process the student is experiencing by having gone through it themselves. By modeling the way for students and sharing faculty experiences provides credibility and relevance in the field. Study participants mentioned that students are impacted by faculty stories by providing relevance to the field. When current interns are called upon to help facilitate mock interviews for CLS candidates, the shared intern experiences further demonstrate *the light at the end of the tunnel* by modeling the way for CLS candidates by promoting stories of success along with program completion and mastery. This module will further explore how goal setting with CLS candidates during advising can help lessen student stress and

anxiety on their journey through the internship application process.

Module 2: Inspiring a Shared Vision

In the second module, faculty will explore how resourcefulness and personal experience can help continue the goal setting process with CLS candidates by inspiring *students to think outside the box* with their internship goals. Study participants suggested that students are stressed about accepting an internship outside of their geographic region of choice and not having an income during the 15 weeks of internship. Faculty suggested a variety of remedies to student financial concerns during internship. Students are urged to apply for the ACLP diversity scholarships, explore work-study programs that provide payment for their work off campus, and the option of applying for a position of graduate assistant when internship completion is an expectation of their academic program completion. Study participants suggested that they urged students to explore resources outside of their comfort zone by navigating who they know and where they might have a place to live beyond their home state or region. Internships are available when the CLS candidate considers all options available to them. Faculty who shared their story about internship and career path help students forge a path of independence and inspire a shared vision by mentoring students toward achieving their career goals. Financial resources will be introduced in the faculty tool kit as a quick reference for faculty to share with their CLS candidates.

Module 3: Challenge the Process

The third module addresses the timeline (Figure 1) to aid in establishing goals for students between advisement meetings. This timeline can provide both a basis for skill

building for the student and a template for the process involved over time as student's progress toward the internship application. Faculty reported that students are often overwhelmed by the application process and the timeline provides smaller tasks to accomplish that address the larger task of preparing their internship application. As students experience challenges in the process, faculty can further break down the steps in the process into more attainable goals based on student need and ability.

Module 4: Enabling Others to Act

Module four recognizes that students are a consumer in higher education which requires accountability on the part of both the student and faculty advisors. The evaluation form for students to complete each semester provides valuable and necessary feedback for faculty to address issues that arise during the mentoring process such as, availability of faculty during advisement hours, rapport building with faculty, goal setting, and the goal progress. The evaluation form for faculty provides a self-assessment of faculty competency skills when mentoring students that can highlight areas of need for personal growth, faculty training and the identified resources required to successfully mentor students toward their goals.

Module 5: Encourage the Heart

Module five addresses the need for faculty to continue professional skill building to advance their mentoring skills and increase their knowledge about the internship process as set by the ACLP. It is critically important for faculty to stay abreast of changes in the internship process to accurately provide students of the most current information and guidelines. The faculty competency evaluation form provides a needs assessment tool

to document faculty needs for training, resources, and the challenges within the mentoring process. This tool creates a way to compile faculty competency data which can highlight both strengths and weaknesses in faculty skills. Rewarding faculty accomplishments builds morale and encourages competency building.

Project Description

Participants: Faculty who mentor CLS candidates

Time Frame: A 3-day workshop facilitates skill development learning modules.

Materials: Participants will be provided with written materials and recorded scenarios. Transformational leadership elements and benefits will be reviewed through recorded links. Role play scenarios engage faculty in mentor and mentee interactions illustrating the value of each of the five transformational leadership elements.

Tool Kit and Workshop: (Appendix A)

1. Resources that include a description of the concept of transformational leadership (Appendix C)
2. Description of five transformational leadership model elements (Table 1)
3. Recorded scenario interactions between mentor and mentee (Appendix B)
4. Glossary of terms
5. Faculty self-assessment of personal strengths and challenges (Appendix F)
6. Resources for faculty (Appendix D)
7. Evaluation for the faculty tool kit (Appendix H)

Faculty Tool Kit

The faculty tool kit (Appendix C) contains activities to address each of the five separate elements in the transformational leadership model. Role play scenarios further illustrate the concept of each element (Appendix C). Discussions, exercises and five modules will provide workshop content for faculty skill development.

Advantages of Recorded Modules

Recorded modules provide an opportunity for skill development learning with a time saving quality while avoiding actual face-to-face interaction during social distancing restrictions due to a pandemic. Many of the workshop materials and discussions can be facilitated via a Zoom experience.

Disadvantages of Recorded Modules

Imposed social distancing guidelines are followed with the use of recorded modules however the concept is a deterrent to quality question and answer sessions with the module facilitator. Discussions will take place via a Zoom chat experience or in-person.

Project Evaluation Plan

As a result of this research study, faculty suggested that a need exists for training in all things child life as well as, how to engage in difficult conversations with students about their career choice, and the need for faculty training with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) resources. LGBTQ and DEI training was an outlier suggestion and is aptly addressed by the Child Life Professional Association (ACLP). For the purposes of this study, the project has

addressed faculty suggested topics congruent with the study, were of the greatest concern by faculty, and provide options to effect social change.

Project Implications

The problem that was addressed in this study was the challenges faculty face when mentoring CLS candidates seeking internships. The study participants candidly shared their thoughts, concerns, and challenges with matriculated and non-matriculated students, faculty time allotments for mentoring students, and the financial challenges that students face during internship completion. Additionally, faculty addressed their need for skill development in the area of, “difficult conversations with students about their goodness of fit in pursuing a career as a child life specialist” as the most prevalent and reported challenge. The problems addressed from the resulting findings provided a template for the faculty development curriculum that is evident in the faculty tool kit. To address a chief concern about time limitations in faculty schedules to adequately mentor students, the faculty tool kit and learning modules were designed for faculty to use as their schedules permit. A template was created to model a step-by-step plan to mentor students through the smaller components of the academic and clinical process. Financial support ideas for students to utilize during internship are suggested. Student interview and assessment tools are provided for faculty to assess student potential for goodness of fit in the program as well as, a faculty self-evaluation tool is provided for faculty identification of mentoring competency and skill development. The Kouzes and Posner transformational leadership model is used in the project tool kit to support faculty skill

development and to provide evaluative student information to help faculty address difficult conversations with students.

This project holds possible social change implications for faculty to collectively advocate about the changes that occur for internship programs as dictated by The Association of Child Life Professionals (ACLP) without input from mentoring faculty, and the sudden changes in degree requirements that effect students preparing to enter the field or seeking internships. Faculty goals to stay informed of academic and clinical changes from ACLP are often challenged by sudden or delayed information about change in requirements whereby students become disillusioned with the field and their prospects for program completion. The COVID-19 pandemic has added to the challenge of securing practicum and internship experience while healthcare institutions had to pause their clinical program acceptance. The results of this project will help support faculty with the challenges in supporting students for a career as a child life specialist. Further, healthcare employers will benefit by having CLS candidates better prepared to enter a clinical environment.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

Academic institutions employ a wide range of qualified faculty to provide a variety of course content. CLS faculty are held to a standard that requires current certification as a CCLS to validate student completion of child life coursework. What is not standard is the length of experience in a clinical setting, concurrent clinical practice, or whether faculty have kept their certification current to further validate their clinical relevance when teaching foundational or clinical fieldwork courses to CLS candidates. This National Child Life Certification further validates faculty relevance when mentoring CLS Candidates toward attaining internship by providing current information to students.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Project Strengths

The objective of this project was to address the faculty challenges within my scope of expertise and develop solutions for challenges that CLS faculty face when mentoring CLS candidates toward internship. Several themes were identified during the data analysis phase of the study, some of which are best addressed by the child life community and stakeholders of ACLP. The challenges identified are more common throughout higher education mentoring and supporting students toward achieving their goals. Faculty identified the need for students to have greater access to mentors for guidance and support beyond what is allocated in faculty scheduling and office hours. This poses an important problem for faculty to do their job effectively. Faculty reported being unavailable for mentoring students with the number of students requiring guidance.

Faculty reported devoting scheduled mentoring for students enrolled in the child life academic program and unable to meet the demand of students needing mentoring not within their university academic program. Many students were enthusiastic about the prospects of a career as a child life specialist without a mentor to guide them and provide accurate information. This prompted the need for a mentorship program coordinated from the professional association ACLP. Another strength of the project design addresses the need for faculty training as mentioned in faculty interviews. Faculty identified their interest in continued learning and skill development to better understand the needs of their students.

Project Limitations

Although many themes were identified from data analysis, several were not able to be addressed by the study project. One limitation was the faculty identified need to better understand LGBTQ and DEI concepts. Another limitation was the faculty identified need for training to address difficult conversations with students, more precisely, identifying students who are not within the goodness of fit range to pursue a career in child life. Perhaps they have difficulties grasping general concepts of growth and development theory, or they cannot perform the requirements of a child life position of holding, comforting, and providing compassionate care and support to children of all ages. It is critical for faculty to help identify students who are not the brightest and smartest and who will no doubt have difficulty securing an internship; it is of greater concern to help students discover another career path before time and finances have been exhausted in a dead end.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

I chose to use the Kouzes and Posner (2007, 2009) model for transformational leadership; however, there are many models and potential theories to adequately address faculty development of mentoring skills that incorporate leadership and skill building. Another approach would engage students to develop a plan for potential challenges in their pursuit to internship such as financial support during internship. Faculty interview suggestions included urging students to apply to internship sites out-of-state while exploring possibilities of support from other family members living out-of-state and developing a master plan to plot their success in steps toward achieving their goals through coursework and internship application completion. Lastly, CLS professionals who mentor students and new child life specialists should be used to support students on their journey toward professional success.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, Leadership, and Change Scholarship

As a scholar, I have learned how to conduct a literature search and find pertinent articles through Google Search, the database at the medical library that I have an affiliation with. I have learned to navigate several databases to find peer reviewed and non-peer reviewed articles. Although it was apparent that peer reviewed articles were more scholarly, they often provided references that were essential in finding exactly what I was looking for to support my literature review.

Developing my interview participant candidates posed some problems during my IRB review, as I had sent an email to a couple of potential participants announcing that I

would hopefully soon be conducting a study. Although these emails were not specific in detail about the study, the IRB review required more detail about the emails before granting me acceptance to move forward. This was a lesson in both study ethics and participant recruitment.

Lastly, I developed an understanding about how to conduct a qualitative study using an interview method. I have a better understanding about how to analyze data through developing codes and themes. The data analysis process was the most exciting aspect of my study, trying to detect similarities and repetition in interview responses from my study participants. I explored outlier responses as discrepant case data to be just as important as repetitive data responses.

Project Development and Evaluation

The data analysis themes were incorporated into the study project design. Several themes appeared to be prevalent in the interview responses, and from those themes, the project study addressed the themes that were within the scope of my capacity to address them. A faculty tool kit was designed to create self-paced models for professional development. Each of the modules addressed one of the themes from the data analysis, along with materials and handouts for learning resources. In addition to the models and resources created for faculty development, a mentoring evaluation for students to indicate mentor satisfaction, a mentoring evaluation for faculty to review their competency development, and a project evaluation to measure utilization of the project materials and effectiveness in addressing model objectives.

Leadership and Change

After analyzing the data from the CLS faculty interviews, my conclusion as a researcher is that CLS candidates are more successfully mentored toward internship attainment when they have the most accurate information from the Child Life Certifying committee and internship guidelines that are a direct result from current clinical practice and in good standing with their membership and credentialing process from the professional governing body known as ACLP. It was suggested in several faculty interviews that it is in the best interest of their students to stay informed of all changes introduced by the ACLP regarding internship and certification of child life professionals. Although many of the changes that occur in the internship requirements and process are often in the best interest of the professional association and not its membership, CLS members are reminded that they have a voice as the stakeholders and membership of this organization. A collective voice by CLS faculty can create social change by involvement in and collaborating with ACLP. A successful internship program depends on clear and concise guidelines that benefit the membership and CLS candidates for internship who are entering the profession.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

When I consider my entire doctoral journey and all that I have learned, I am humbled by the knowledge gained and scholarly work that has contributed to the completion of this study. I did not anticipate the candid and open faculty responses from my study participants. They were dedicated, engaged in their work with students, and very passionate about student success and internship attainment. I was truly amazed with

how immersed faculty were in their teaching assignments, mentoring roles, and clinical advisement with students. I had a preconceived notion that students were not getting their needs met, and to the contrary, students have the support of many faculty advisors cheering for them, assisting with challenges, and going the extra mile to make sure students fully understood the journey ahead of them as they prepare for internships. My study project was designed to support faculty preparation for their work with CLS students and skill development that promotes mentoring competency.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Implications

The potential impact for positive social change can occur at the individual and community level. At the individual level, faculty may have an improved understanding of the challenges they face when mentoring CLS candidates toward internship. At the community level, our collective voices can create social change that promote greater transparency within the professional association and the changes that occur with the internship requirements and program. As the stakeholders of the ACLP, we need to remember that the ACLP exists to promote the scholarly work that we do and training of the next generations of child life specialists. Transparency is not a new concept and should be applied to faculty mentoring and how students are guided toward achieving their goals. Early evaluation of student attributes that promote success in their chosen field should applied in all areas of higher education and training.

Applications

Mentoring skill development of faculty can be applied to many fields of study in higher education and for faculty involved in mentoring and guiding students toward achieving their goals. The step-by-step model of mentoring goals can be applied and adapted to many degree programs for students and provide a more comprehensive illustration of the big picture broken down into smaller more achievable goals for students who may feel overwhelmed. When a student orientation, materials for success, clearly defined program introduction, and opportunities for student networking under the supervision of faculty mentors, students may not have the support they need to achieve their goals. In academic programs that prepare students for their career goals, it is financially and academically advantageous to provide such university support. College attrition rates can be lessened and university statistics for student degree completion rates can be boosted when faculty have ample support for mentoring and students receive the guidance that is necessary for degree completion.

Direction for Future Research

The direction of future research should incorporate comprehensive training for faculty in higher education institutions. Leadership skills can be developed with ongoing and further training. This study contributes to a better understanding of the challenges that CLS faculty face in mentoring CLS candidates toward internship attainment. This study can be adapted to include faculty challenges in other areas of study when their students require internship to advance in their profession. Another direction of study might include the components of faculty training that could provide greater preparation

for mentoring students toward achieving their career goals. Lastly, further study might look at the governing body of professional associations and how their decisions effect their membership and future generations of child life professionals.

Conclusion

The problem that was addressed in this study examined the challenges CLS faculty face when mentoring CLS students toward internship. The purpose of this study was to better understand the challenges faculty face and how to address those challenges. After conducting 10 semi-structured individual faculty interviews, faculty perceptions were analyzed for codes and themes. According to the data analysis of this study, it is recommended that CLS faculty continue to engage in professional development opportunities such as the created project faculty tool kit with the added recommendation that CLS faculty continue to keep a clinical assignment to draw from current experiences when instructing CLS candidates. Additionally, I observed that CLS candidates are more successfully mentored toward internship attainment when they have the most accurate information from the child life certifying committee and internship guidelines that are a direct result from current clinical practice and good standing membership/credentialing from the professional governing body known as the ACLP. It was suggested in several faculty interviews that it is in the best interest of their students to stay informed of all changes introduced by the ACLP regarding internship and certification of child life professionals. Additionally, CLS faculty participants suggested, “CLS candidates who were selected for internship placements were mentored by faculty who were more engaged in their clinical and academic responsibilities, willing to take advantage of

continuing education opportunities and driven to participate in leadership skill building.”

This statement affirms the professional commitment of CLS faculty who mentor CLS candidates toward success amidst a myriad of challenges. Another conclusion from this research study suggests that CLS candidates seek out mentors and counselors with whom they have developed a professional relationship from either the classroom setting or their clinical experience. Although most students from a child life academic program have an assigned adviser, it was reported that students are free and encouraged to seek out any CCLS to mentor them. Clinical experience preceptors are viewed in a mentoring role that exemplifies relevance in the field through certification attainment and the modeling of practical experience supported by an evidence-based practice foundation from coursework in the academic setting. Faculty reported an average of 13.8 years of clinical experience as CCLS, which provided faculty with relevant patient stories to validate theory about children in hospitals and supporting the developmental continuum.

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Appendix A: The Faculty Tool Kit Index

1. The Faculty Tool Kit includes a description of the concept of Transformational Leadership (Appendix C)
2. Description of Five Transformational Leadership Model Elements (Table 1)
3. Recorded Scenario interactions between Mentor and Mentee (Appendix B)
4. Glossary of terms
5. Faculty Self-Assessment of personal strengths and challenges (Appendix F)
6. Resources for further exploration (Appendix D)
7. The Faculty Tool Kit evaluation form (Appendix H)

Appendix B: Recoded Scenarios

Model the Way – (Shared values to increase confidence, commitment, and consistent progress) *Mentor*: Guest speaker promotes how they charted a course for attaining an internship, certification, and navigating a course for career success. Reinforce faculty commitment to support student success. Provide access to career resources.

Mentee: Define their CLS goals and with mentor, create a roadmap for charting progress toward achieving career success.

Inspiring a Shared Vision – (Envision the future and set goals)

Mentor: Consistent counseling sessions provide an informed vision of CLS candidate goals. Pair CLS candidate with senior or graduate student mentors to support the peer process. Set goals and map career steps toward success.

Mentee: Engage in self-assessment of strengths and challenges. Document realistic goals with a timeline for achieving them (including potential and unforeseen academic, financial, and personal constraints)

Challenge the Process – (Change, innovate, improve)

Mentor: Define how the academic institution can support CLS candidate progress through potential academic and financial constraints via grants, institutional support and the counseling process.

Mentee: Must adhere to the agreed upon realistic goals toward career success. Taking in consideration opportunities outside of the candidates' comfort zone (such as, consideration of out-of-state internship sites).

Enabling others to Act – (Collaboration)

Mentor: Collaborate with CLS candidate at prearranged checkpoints in journey to sustain consistent progress toward obtaining internship.

Mentee: Remain consistent in progress and counseling appointments to remain in good standing and with the full support of mentor.

Encourage the Heart – (Recognize contributions)

Mentor: Encourage CLS candidate progress by promoting student successes publicly on visual boards and in printed materials such as student newsletters. Invite CLS candidates to promote their success and the achievements of their career journey on visual boards and at student symposiums.

Mentee: CLS Candidates can be asked to champion a visual achievement board to acknowledge progress and promote student success.

Appendix C: Transformational Leadership Model Element Scenarios

Model the Way:

Set examples to reflect shared values, achieve small wins to build confidence, commitment, and consistent progress.

Scenario – Faculty provides a strategic plan for obtaining internships and faculty defines role in mentoring candidates toward success.

Inspiring a Shared Vision:

Envision a meaningful future by enlisting common values, interests, hopes and dreams.

Scenario – Review candidate goals and engage candidate to define next steps. Use a strategic plan as checklist for mentoring candidate toward next steps to achieving goals.

Challenge the Process:

Search out challenging opportunities to change, innovate and improve.

Scenario – Define candidate ideal placement and set strategy for obtaining ideal internship. Geographic region, finances (giving up employment to complete internship), and small vs. large pediatric program internship.

Enabling Others to Act:

Foster collaboration through goals and trust building. Develop people's ability by developing competence and provide support.

Scenario – Develop candidate: mentor relationship over time to fully gather information about candidate and to successfully provide mentorship support that is unique and individual to candidate needs. Define length of time that mentorship covers (pre and/or post internship).

Encourage the Heart:

Recognize contributions to success. Celebrate accomplishments regularly.

Scenario – Acknowledge candidate successes as well as faculty successes in mentoring and successful internship placements. Promote positivity with a celebration of individual and department accomplishments.

Appendix D: Faculty Resources

Mentoring

Stand by Me: The Risks and Rewards of Mentoring, Rhodes, J. (2002).

www.mentoring.org/research_corner

Group Mentoring

Group Mentoring: A Study of Mentoring Groups in Three Programs, Herrera, C., Vang, Z., and Gale, L. Y. (2002). (Philadelphia Public/Private Ventures; Alexandria, VA. MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership.

www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assests/153_publication.pdf

Peer Mentoring

Peer Resources

www.peer.ca/mentor.html

E-Mentoring

E-Mentoring Clearinghouse, MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership.

www.mentoring.org/emc

ACLP Diversity Scholarships

www.childlifecouncil.org/diversityscholarships/

U.S. Department of Education

Federal Work Study (FWS) Programs

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/fws/index.html>

Graduate Assistantships (GA)

Apply within your academic institution upon degree completion to assist professors and faculty with course supervision with an hourly rate of pay.

Grants & Programs

Apply for Pell Grant Eligibility.

<https://www.educationconnection.com/pellgrantsinfo/pursueeducation>

Laws & Guidance

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) FERPA Civil Rights New IDEA Website

Appendix E: Mentee Evaluation Form

Please provide information and insight regarding the mentoring program you have participated in by indicating a rating value for the following questions related to the year's activities and the nature of the mentoring process.

Mentee's Name:

Mentor's Name:

Year:

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My mentor was accessible and available				
My mentor communicated regularly with me.				
My mentor was able to lead me to the correct campus resource to resolve a particular matter.				
My mentor demonstrated a reasonable interest/concern towards me.				
My mentor was an asset and a benefit to me.				
I feel more certain of my career path because of having a mentor.				

Qualitative Questions:

1. What did you gain from your involvement in the program?

2. What activities/goals did your mentor assist you with?

3. How often did you meet with your mentor?

4. What (if anything) are you doing differently as a result of your mentoring experience?

5. How could the program be improved?

Appendix F: Mentoring Competency Assessment

Rate your skill level in the following areas:

Rating Scale (1 - 7)	1 Need Skills	2	3 Some Skills	4	5 Skilled	6	7 Mastery
1. Active listening							
2. Providing feedback							
3. Establishing trust							
4. Accommodating different communication styles							
5. Employ strategies to improve communication							
6. Coordinate with other mentors							
7. Set clear expectations of the mentoring partnership							
8. Align your expectations with your mentee							
9. Consider how personal and professional differences impact expectations							
10. Work with your mentee to set realistic goals							
11. Help mentee develop strategies to meet goals							
12. Accurately estimate your mentees' level of academic knowledge							
13. Accurately estimate your mentees' ability to engage children							
14. Employing strategies to enhance your mentees' knowledge and abilities							

15. Motivate your mentee							
16. Build your mentees' confidence							
17. Stimulate your mentees' creativity							
18. Acknowledge your mentees' professional contributions							
19. Negotiate a path to professional independence with your mentee							
20. Mindful of any biases you bring to the mentor/mentee relationship							
21. Work effectively with mentee when their personal background is different from your own (age, race, gender, class, region, culture, religion, family composition)							
22. Helping your mentees network effectively							
23. Help your mentee set career goals							
24. Help your mentee balance work with their personal life							
25. Understand your impact as a role model							
26. Help your mentee acquire resources (e.g., grants, etc.)							
27. Refer mentee to resources when level of stress/anxiety is beyond your scope of practice.							

Appendix G: Types of Mentoring

Traditional One-to-One Mentoring –

This type of mentoring is best suited for one faculty member and one CLS student to provide academic advisement and track progress toward completion of their child life internship application. The relationship may last throughout the academic program with regularly scheduled meetings.

Group Mentoring –

Often takes place at the onset of the academic year whereby CLS students are encouraged to develop peer support relationships through shared activities during orientation and program description. Student and faculty interaction may be structured by a meeting agenda, student activities, or scheduled speaker event.

Team Mentoring –

Often involves several faculty working in small groups of students to enhance an activity or learning outcome such as completing an internship application essay and having it peer reviewed for immediate feedback and faculty input and guidance.

Peer Mentoring –

This style of mentoring provides an opportunity for CLS students to receive guidance and inspiration from current child life interns or newly certified CCLS from the same academic institution or clinical setting. Peer mentoring adds an element of validation for students seeking the same professional outcome along with candid information and support from a peer.

E-mentoring (online mentoring) –

When face to face instruction and/or advisement is not an option (such as during a pandemic) students receive the mentoring through e-mentoring, email, zoom, and online guidance. For some international students, the e-mentoring option is the most viable and cost-effective way to receive valuable information about academic program completion and applying for internship. Students are able to receive the same mentoring relationship as are students with face-to-face appointments with faculty advisors.

Appendix H: Faculty Tool Kit Workshop Evaluation

Please use the following	1 – Strongly Disagree	2 – Disagree	3 – Neutral	4 –Agree		5 – Strongly Agree		
				1	2	3	4	5
Characteristics of Effective Mentors	The content was informative							
	The speaker was engaging							
	I will use this information in my practice							
Comments:								

Maintaining the Mentoring Relationship				1	2	3	4	5
	The content was informative							
The Module was engaging								
I will use this information in my practice								
Comments:								

Types of Mentoring				1	2	3	4	5
	The content was informative							
The speaker was engaging								
I will use this information in my practice								
Comments:								

Design of Mentoring Timeline				1	2	3	4	5
	The content was informative							
The speaker was engaging								
I will use this information in my practice								
Comments:								

Practicing the Transformational Leadership Scenarios		1	2	3	4	5
	The content was informative					
	The speaker was engaging					
	I will use this information in my practice					
Comments:						

Exploring Mentoring Resources		1	2	3	4	5
	The content was informative					
	The speaker was engaging					
	I will use this information in my practice					
Comments:						

Workshop evaluation – Logistics and Accommodations

	1	2	3	4	5
Preparation for the workshop was appropriate					
Materials were clear and informative					
The audio/visual media were suitable for the conference					
Comments:					

Workshop Evaluation - overall

	1	2	3	4	5
The workshop accomplished its stated objectives					
The content of the workshop was appropriate for my needs					
I received information that will be immediately useful for my academic development					
This workshop has increased my interest in mentoring					
I would recommend this workshop to future faculty					
What future topics would you like to see covered?					
Comments:					

Appendix I: Students Career Path Assessment

It is important to consider the reasons you choose your career carefully. While a modest salary and engaging work are at the top of the list, there are additional incentives for pursuing a career in healthcare. Here are three reasons:

1. To make a difference in peoples' lives. You will contribute to creating a healthier world whether you work in healthcare services as a child life specialist or as a child life administrator.
2. You can work and live anywhere you want. Child Life professionals are nationally certified and are in high demand nearly everywhere across the nation. As a qualified child life specialist, you can decide where you want to live and the setting in which you work. You can go where you want with portable skills.
3. You will be in high demand. Child Life Specialists enjoy job security even during a pandemic because children need more than medicine in times of uncertainty. The field of child life is growing, unlike many industries that are losing workers.

Student Assessment Questions:

Why are you interested in a child life career?

What are my skills and interests that make me a good candidate for a career in child life?

How would you rate your competency in the following areas?

	Excellent	Good	Not Sure	Needs Work
1. Verbal Skills				
2. Written Communication Skills				
3. Active Listening Skills				
4. Empathy				
5. Respect				
6. Tact				
7. Non-judgmental				
8. Persuasive				
9. Reassuring				

Appendix J: Study Announcement

Study Seeks Child Life Specialist Faculty Participants Who Teach or Mentor Child Life Students

This new study is called “*Challenges Child Life Specialist Faculty Face in supporting Child Life Specialist Candidates Seeking internships*”. This study invites you to share your perceptions about the challenges you face in supporting child life students seeking internships. This study is part of the doctoral study for Debi Fingerhut, an EdD student at Walden University.

About the study:

- One 30-minute audio interview
- One 10-minute review of data analysis summary.

Volunteer participants:

- Faculty who teach Child Life students
- Faculty who teach Child Life coursework

If you are interested in participating, please provide your email consent to my return

**To Confidentially Volunteer,
access this QR Code**



Appendix K: Recruitment and Study Log

1-11-22 Received notification of Walden IRB Approval
1-18-22 Emailed Study Invite to potential participants
1-19-22 Resent Study Invite with QR Code for Consent to potential participants
1-19-22 Emailed Consent document to recipients who could not open QR Code
1-18-22 Scheduled first interview after consent received (24 min)
1-20-22 Interview 1
1-20-22 Transcribed interview 1 and created a spreadsheet for recording data
1-24-22 Scheduled interviews 2-5 when consent received (median time 30 min)
1-24-22 Interview 2
1-25-22 Interview 3
1-26-22 Interview 4
1-31-22 Interview 5
1-31-22 Transcribed data from interviews 2-5 and added to spreadsheet
1-31-22 Some phone audio recording inaudible
2-1-22 Scheduled interviews 6-9 when consent received
2-1-22 Interview 6
2-2-22 Interview 7
2-4-22 Interview 8
2-11-22 Interview 9
2-11-22 Transcribed data from interview 6-9 and added to spreadsheet
2-11-22 Rescheduled interview 10 when consent received
2-15-22 Interview 10
2-15-22 Did not record interview 10 with background noise while she was driving.
2-16-22 Transcribed data from interview 10 adding data to spreadsheet
2-16-22 A \$10.00 Starbucks gift card and thank you note sent to study participants
2-19-22 Analyzed data manually using inductive approach
2-22-22 Checked transcripts against the recordings for accuracy
2-25-22 Opened Quirkos Account and uploaded data
2-26-22 Disappointed in Quirkos analysis for themes.
3-10-22 Requested information from Thematic.com to analyze data
3-15-22 Uploaded data to Thematic.com for analysis
3-16-22 Shared dataset with chair and committee

Appendix L: Citi Certification



Completion Date 24-Aug-2021
 Expiration Date N/A
 Record ID 44404480

This is to certify that:

Deborah Fingerhut

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification
 through CME.

Student's
 (Curriculum Group)
Doctoral Student Researchers
 (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
 (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Walden University

CITI
 Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wb13531d0-ddf8-4726-aa0e-56481316c210-44404480

Introduction

The faculty tool kit builds on the elements of practice from the transformational leadership model of Kouzes and Posner (2007, 2009) to address five major components of effective leadership as applied to the following mentoring project sections. As a self-paced skill development tool kit for faculty, the following agenda provides an approximated allowance of time to complete learning outcomes.

The learning outcomes of the faculty tool kit:

- Faculty will develop a step-by-step plan for mentoring CLS candidates toward internships from a provided model.
- Faculty will explore resources to help students explore financial support options during internship.
- Faculty will gain a better understanding of how an initial interview and assessment of student skills and competencies can provide early detection of goodness of fit for students pursuing a degree and career in child life.
- Faculty will gain a better understanding of the importance of the mentoring role and the competency skill building opportunities mentoring provides from the use of the self-assessment tool.
- Faculty will have an opportunity to reflect on their personal skill development and the evaluation that assesses the faculty tool kit effectiveness (Appendix H).

Agenda

The Faculty Tool Kit Skill Development Workshop

Faculty Skill Development Components:

- I. Overview of Mentoring (Day 1) 9:00 AM-12:00
- II. Mentoring Design (Day 1) 1:00-4:00 PM
- III. Mentoring Skill Development (Day 2) 9:00 AM-12:00, 1:00-4:00 PM
- IV. Mentoring Process (Day 3) 9:00 AM-12:00, 1:00-4:00 PM
- V. Mentoring Evaluation (Day 3) 4:00-4:15 PM

Participants: Faculty who teach child life coursework and mentor CLS candidates

Rationale

The faculty tool kit dedicates a section to each of the five components. In each section you will find information and resources on how to implement proven practices to ensure a strong overall program. As you develop the mentoring design for your program, use the information and resources to compliment your unique program. The transformational leadership model can be applied at each stage of the mentoring timeline to provide clarity for faculty leadership skill development The mentoring timeline (Figure 1) is a guide for faculty to alter in a way that best compliments your academic program. Included in the tool kit sections are the following:

- A mentoring timeline to identify progress implemented in CLS student advisement sessions (Figure 1).

- A glossary of terms to help you understand the transformational leadership terms within the tool kit.

Glossary of Terms

For the purposes of this project, I will define mentoring as the following:

Mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship between CLS faculty and CLS students for the purpose of guidance, support, and encouragement aimed to development the confidence and skills of the mentee.

Traditional mentoring - One faculty member to one CLS student.

Group mentoring - One faculty member to a group of CLS students.

Team mentoring - Several faculty working with small groups of CLS students whereby the ratio is not greater than 1:4.

Peer mentoring - CLS Interns mentoring CLS students.

E-mentoring - Mentoring via email or Internet.

I. Overview of Mentoring (Day 1)

It has been said by Lee, Dennis, and Campbell (2007) that “Having a good mentor early in your career can mean the difference between success and failure in any field” (791). The authors looked at what made a good mentor and found personal characteristics worth noting. Passion, enthusiasm, and positivity were words from mentee reports. If a mentor is not passionate about the field, then how can they properly support students? Other words used to describe the perfect mentor included: *Sensitivity* in the form of a sympathetic ear or advice and direction to support services; *An appreciation for individual differences* should be the foundation of faculty

advising as students come from all walks of life and diversity, equity and inclusion are at the forefront of all mission statements. *Respect* is a powerful word that resonated not just for students but between colleagues to inspire confidence in one's collaborators. *Unselfishness* in one's ideas shared with students can propel students toward success. When faculty teach and advise students, they instill a sense of unselfishness that inspires the next generation of child life clinicians. Lastly, mentees pointed out a couple of tips for mentors that they wished to see: Faculty should maintain an *open-door policy*; Faculty should *inspire with optimism*; Faculty should provide a *balance in direction* between the micromanagement of students and healthy guidance toward independence and creativity; and Faculty need to *celebrate* student accomplishments and successes. This workshop will provide participants with opportunities to discuss the qualities and characteristics of successful mentors (Table 4 and Table 5).

Table 4 *Characteristics of Successful Mentors*

	Selfless	Creativity
	Available	Integrity
	Role Model	Good Listener
	Visionary	Encouraging
	Passionate	Goal Oriented
	Honest	Clear Communicator
	Realistic	Patient
	High Expectations	Provides Accountability
	Organized	Identifies Resources
	Competent	Flexible
	Enthusiastic	Understanding

Table 5 *Qualities of Successful Mentors*

Qualities	Characteristics
Selfless	Selfless; Available; Create opportunities; Identify resources; Flexible; Patient
Integrity	Integrity; Role Model; Honest
Inspirational	Passionate; Encouraging; Enthusiastic
Visionary	Have a vision for you; High Expectations; Goal Directed
Competent	Competent; Realistic; Organized
Great Communicators	Great Communicator; Great Listener

II. Mentoring Design (Day 1)

Responsible mentoring can occur in a variety of forms: (Appendix I)

- Traditional mentoring: One faculty member to one CLS student.
- Group mentoring: One faculty member to a group of CLS students.
- Team mentoring: Several faculty working with small groups of CLS students whereby the ratio is not greater than 1:4.
- Peer mentoring: CLS Interns mentoring CLS students.
- E-mentoring: Mentoring via email or internet.

Duration

The duration of mentoring may exist from the moment a student asks a faculty member for specific information about the process of becoming a child life specialist. The duration may last throughout the CLS students' academic to professional journey and beyond. For the purposes of the faculty development training provided with the faculty tool kit, three full days of instructor facilitated skill building will utilize as variety of teaching materials from recorded scenarios, handouts, content materials, and exercises.

III. Mentoring Skill Development (Day 2)

The three most important concepts of the mentoring process for faculty who mentor CLS students include: *Faculty Training*; *Matching Students* with receptive faculty members; and *Monitoring and Supporting* student progress during the mentoring process.

Faculty Training will be addressed in this tool kit by providing a basic understanding of the mentoring process as a foundation for further skill building. Additionally, having rigorous criteria for accepting students into an academic child life program will support faculty and student successes in the mentoring process. Faculty who assists CLS students to grow academically, clinically, and professionally are investing their time, compassion, patience, and commitment for helping to shape the next generation of child life specialist. Therefore, it is important to begin with top CLS candidates at the start of their journey. Faculty who has clinical training will have relevant stories to share with students and understand more fully the steps and phases to application completion. The transformational leadership model will be highlighted here to expand faculty understanding of how to promote student success while developing faculty skill competency in mentoring. The transformational leadership model components are described in a variety of tables and appendices (Appendix C, Table 1, Table 2) and for faculty clarity in understanding, the five components are further described in the following bold examples:

Model the Way - Set examples to reflect shared values, achieve small wins to build confidence, commitment, and consistent progress. Faculty design a strategic plan for obtaining internships and faculty defines role in mentoring candidates toward success.

Inspiring a Shared Vision - Envision a meaningful future by enlisting common values, interests, hopes and dreams. Review CLS candidate goals and engage CLS candidate to define next steps. Use a strategic plan as checklist for mentoring candidate toward next steps to achieving goals.

Challenge the Process - Search out challenging opportunities to change, innovate and improve. Define candidate ideal placement and set strategy for obtaining ideal internship. Geographic region, finances (giving up employment to complete internship), and small vs. large pediatric program internship.

Enabling Others to Act - Foster collaboration through goals and trust building. Develop people's ability by developing competence and provide support. Develop candidate: mentor relationship over time to fully gather information about candidate and to successfully provide mentorship support that is unique and individual to candidate needs. Define length of time that mentorship covers.

Encourage the Heart - Recognize contributions to success. Celebrate accomplishments regularly. Acknowledge candidate successes as well as faculty successes in mentoring and successful internship placements. Promote positivity with a celebration of individual and department accomplishments. Celebrating student program completion and students who secure internships as an end goal, provides validation to all students that success is within their grasp.

Matching Students with receptive faculty members may be more difficult depending on the type of programs you encounter CLS students in. Many child life academic programs assign faculty advisors/ mentors who regularly meet with students during scheduled office hours, other programs may assign faculty mentors, yet the student is free to seek out any faculty member for guidance and advisement. Lastly, CLS students who are not enrolled in a child life academic program may find it more difficult to find advisement and get accurate information faculty who may not be

practicing child life specialists. For faculty to accurately support CLS students, they need to have the most up to date information provided by the ACLP. It is not enough to be able to gather website information for students but as a practicing CCLS you are embedded in the process of advancing your professional certification with the annual continuing education credits required, keeping your certification current, understanding the scope of child life clinical practice, and maintaining your professional competencies as a practicing CCLS clinician.

Monitoring and Supporting CLS student progress may or may not be within the scope of faculty advisement, but it is a very important step in helping students prepare for the application and certification process in their child life professional journey. By setting goals and/or keeping a student checklist of the application components the student has accomplished may help CLS student stay on track throughout their journey. By having a faculty member who has been through the process before, validates the importance of each step in the application process. It is also during these advisement meetings that faculty can have those difficult conversations about a student lagging in progress and perhaps not being the best fit for the child life profession (Appendix J). Faculty suggested in the study interviews that students must create the best possible application for internship as space is limited therefore, anything less than a stellar application may be rejected in the review process.

IV. Mentoring Process (Day 3)

The type of mentoring that you use will help define the length and frequency of your mentoring commitment. As you experience the mentoring process with CLS students, you will be able to incorporate goals for both program evaluation and to assess student progress. Five types of mentoring will be described (Appendix G) to provide clarity and understanding for which mentoring type is most appropriate for your faculty situation. Use the mentoring timeline (Figure 1) to keep mentoring sessions on track and to gauge student expectations and progress. Compare the mentoring timeline with the transformational leadership components (Table 6).

Figure 1: Mentoring Timeline

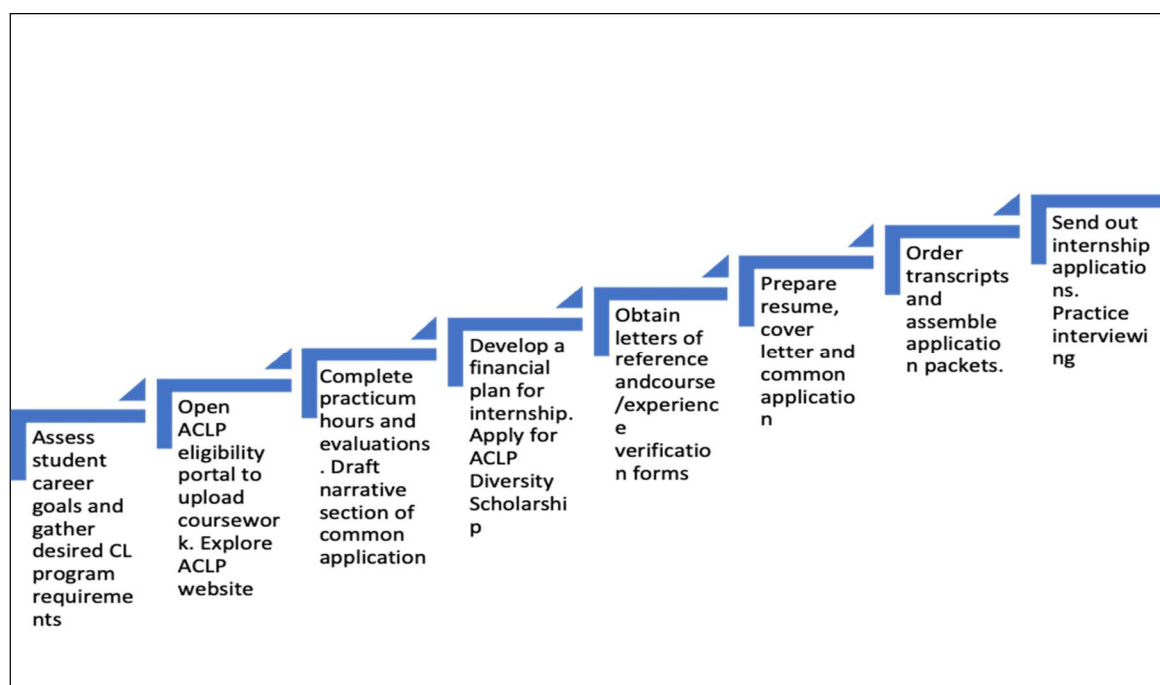


Table 6 *Mentoring Timeline vs. Transformational Leadership Components*

Mentoring Timeline Tasks	Transformational Leadership Concepts
Assess student career goals and gather desired CL Program Information	Model the Way
Complete practicum hours and evaluations.	Inspire a Shared Vision
Develop a financial plan for internship. Apply for an ACLP Eligibility Assessment.	Challenge the Process
Obtain letters of reference and course/ experience	Enable Others to Act
Prepare resume, cover letter and common application	
Order transcripts and assemble application	Encourage the Heart
Send out internship applications. Practice interviewing skills	

Mentoring Evaluation (Day 3)

Ongoing program improvement is an important aspect of stakeholder satisfaction. The academic institution and the CLS students who populate the academic program are your stakeholders who have a vested interest in providing quality, accurate information that drives student success. This is a hallmark of a quality program and is one of the best marketing tools for the academic institution. Faculty are encouraged to develop the following: A mentee evaluation for measuring whether expected outcomes have occurred for students (Appendix E); An evaluation plan to measure mentor progress accurately (Appendix F); And an evaluation of the faculty tool kit workshop effectiveness (Appendix H).

Project Implications

The faculty tool kit workshop encourages participation in professional development using the resources in the faculty tool kit, engagement in exercises, discussion materials, and skill building to promote confidence and competence as a CLS mentor. Faculty enter the field of teaching and student advising in higher education for the purpose of preparing the next generation of child life specialists, however faculty experience obstacles when providing students with accurate advisement, ample time to meet student needs of advisement, and facilitating student skill attainment on their journey toward their professional goals.

Conclusion

Educational theorists and practitioners must expand their knowledge base regarding the linkage between transformational leadership and organizational development. Given the consensus surrounding leadership to promote professional growth of those around you, especially the relationship between faculty mentor and student, further research is needed to study this phenomenon. Discovering the depth of interrelationship and interconnectedness between higher education transformational leadership, institutional dynamics may be the defining legacy of this generation of educational leaders. Faculty participants in the skill development workshop are encouraged to utilize the evaluation form (Appendix H) and when collected by the workshop facilitator, a certificate of completion is provided.