

# A Q Methodology Study of a Doctoral Counselor Education Teaching Instruction Course



The Professional Counselor™  
Volume 10, Issue 4, Pages 472–487  
<http://tpcjournal.nbcc.org>  
© 2020 NBCC, Inc. and Affiliates  
doi:10.15241/erb.10.4.472

Eric R. Baltrinic, Eric G. Suddeath

Many counselor education and supervision (CES) doctoral programs offer doctoral-level teaching instruction courses as part of their curriculum to help prepare students for future teaching roles, yet little is known about the essential design, delivery, and evaluation components of these courses. Accordingly, the authors investigated instructor and student views on the essential design, delivery, and evaluation components of a doctoral counselor education teaching instruction (CETI) course using Q methodology. Eight first-year CES doctoral students and the course instructor from a large Midwestern university completed Q-sorts, which were factor analyzed. Three factors were revealed, which were named *The Course Designer*, *The Future Educator*, and *The Empathic Instructor*. The authors gathered post-Q-sort qualitative data from participants using a semi-structured questionnaire, and the results from the questionnaires were incorporated into the factor interpretations. Implications for incorporating the findings into CES pedagogy and for designing, delivering, and evaluating CETI courses are presented. Limitations and future research suggestions for CETI course design and delivery are discussed.

**Keywords:** teaching instruction course, Q methodology, pedagogy, counselor education, doctoral students

Counselor education doctoral students (CEDS) need teaching preparation as part of their doctoral training (Hall & Hulse, 2010; Orr et al., 2008), including the completion of formal courses in pedagogy, adult learning, or teaching (Barrio Minton & Price, 2015; Hunt & Weber Gilmore, 2011; Suddeath et al., 2020). Teaching instruction courses may occur within or outside of the counselor education curriculum. Within counselor education, counselor education teaching instruction (CETI) courses are those doctoral-level seminar or semester-long curricular experiences designed to provide CEDS with the basic foundational knowledge for effective teaching (Association for Counselor Education and Supervision [ACES], 2016). CETI courses are cited as an important foundational training component for preparing CEDS for success in fulfilling future teaching roles (ACES, 2016). Additionally, simply possessing expert knowledge in one's field (e.g., counseling) is not sufficient to support student learning in the classroom (ACES, 2016; Waalkes et al., 2018), a reality recognized in counselor education some time ago by Lanning (1990).

To increase the attention to and strengthen the rigor of teaching preparation, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) developed standards for fostering students' knowledge and skills in teaching through curricular and/or experiential training (CACREP, 2015). Specifically, within the CACREP (2015) teaching standards, CEDS need to learn "instructional and curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation methods relevant to counselor education" (Section 6, Standard B.3.d.). Although programs may use teaching internships (Hunt & Weber Gilmore, 2011), structured teaching teams (Orr et al., 2008), coteaching (Baltrinic et al., 2016), and teaching mentorships (Baltrinic et al., 2018) to address standards and train CEDS for their future roles as educators, teaching coursework is cited as the most common preparation practice

---

Eric R. Baltrinic, PhD, LPCC-S, is an assistant professor at the University of Alabama. Eric G. Suddeath, PhD, LPC, is an assistant professor at Mississippi State University – Meridian. Correspondence can be addressed to Eric Baltrinic, Graves Hall, Box 870231, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487, [erbaltrinic@ua.edu](mailto:erbaltrinic@ua.edu).

(Barrio Minton & Price, 2015; Suddeath et al., 2020; Waalkes et al., 2018). Despite our knowledge that teaching coursework is commonly used for teaching preparation (Barrio Minton & Price, 2015; Suddeath et al., 2020), little is known about how counselor educators design and deliver these courses within counselor education. Although a few studies in counselor education and supervision address teaching coursework (e.g., Suddeath et al., 2020; Waalkes et al., 2018), it is in a cursory way or as one part of a broader inquiry into teacher preparation processes.

### **Perceived Effectiveness of CETI Courses**

Ideally, teaching coursework, whether offered within counselor education specifically or not, should provide doctoral students with a basic framework for effective teaching. Unfortunately, as previously mentioned, little is known about what constitutes a CETI course. Moreover, the few studies that address this training component suggest inconsistency in its perceived value and effectiveness. For example, early research by Tollerud (1990) and Olguin (2004) found no difference in terms of teaching self-efficacy between those with and without coursework, regardless of the number of courses taken. Similarly, in Hall and Hulse's (2010) study examining counselor educators' doctoral teaching preparation and perceived preparedness to teach, participants found their teaching coursework least helpful for preparing them to teach. To improve the effectiveness of their coursework, participants in Hall and Hulse's study indicated a desire for multiple courses with a greater focus on the practical aspects of teaching, approaches for teaching adult learners, and more opportunities to engage in actual teaching during the course.

In a recent study by Waalkes et al. (2018), participants expressed similar sentiments reporting a general lack of emphasis and rigor in teacher preparation as compared to other core areas of development and especially for teaching coursework. Specific deficiencies included a lack of emphasis on pedagogy and teaching strategies and a discrepancy between their teaching coursework and their actual teaching responsibilities as current counselor educators (Waalkes et al., 2018). Given their experience, participants indicated a desire for greater integration of doctoral-level teaching coursework throughout their programs as well as "philosophy and theory, pedagogy/teaching strategies, understanding developmental levels of students, course design, assessment, and setting classroom expectations" (Waalkes et al., 2018, p. 73).

Unlike Tollerud (1990) and Olguin (2004), Suddeath et al. (2020) found that formal teaching coursework significantly predicted increased self-efficacy toward teaching. Furthermore, participants indicated that formal coursework strengthened their self-efficacy toward teaching slightly more than their fieldwork in teaching experiences. However, it is unclear from this study what aspects of the CEDS' coursework contributed to increased self-efficacy. In a study by Hunt and Weber Gilmore (2011), CEDS identified elements such as the creation of syllabi, exams, rubrics, and a philosophy of teaching and receiving support and feedback from instructors and peers as most helpful in their coursework experiences. Those who did not find the course helpful expressed a desire for more opportunities to engage in actual teaching. Overall, the literature addressing the relative effectiveness of teaching coursework suggests the need to (a) improve teaching courses, (b) connect teaching courses to additional teaching experiences, and (c) make it a meaningful and impactful experience for CEDS.

### **Instructor Qualities and Course Delivery**

Counselor education research also suggests that instructor qualities and course delivery influence the learning experiences of counseling students (Malott et al., 2014; Moate, Cox, et al., 2017; Moate, Holm, & West, 2017). Regarding instructor qualities, two recent studies examining novice counselors' instructor preferences within their didactic (Moate, Cox, et al., 2017) and clinical courses (Moate, Holm, & West, 2017) found that, overall, participants preferred instructors who were kind,

supportive, empathic, genuine, and passionate about the course. Likewise, Malott et al. (2014) reported that instructors who were caring, which included characteristics such as respect, interest, warmth, and availability, were “essential in motivating learning” (p. 295). Moate and Cox (2015) also emphasized the importance of cultivating a supportive and safe learning environment for increasing students’ active participation and engagement in their learning.

Regarding course delivery, overall participants in didactic and clinical courses preferred instructors who were pragmatic and connected course material to their actual work as counselors (Moate, Cox, et al., 2017; Moate, Holm, & West, 2017). Within didactic courses specifically—which included career counseling, theories, ethics, and diagnosis—Moate, Cox, et al. (2017) emphasized students’ lack of preference for instructors who primarily utilized lecture or PowerPoint for instruction. This relates to the topic of teacher-centered versus learner-centered approaches. Those who use teacher-centered approaches utilize lecture as the primary mode of delivery and focus on the transmission of content through lecture from the experienced expert to the inexperienced novice, which may foster passive learning (Moate & Cox, 2015). In contrast, those who use learner-centered approaches emphasize shared responsibility for learning, which encourages active learning and application of course content through collaborative learning activities to tap into the collective knowledge of the group as well as supporting students’ active engagement and application of course content (Malott et al., 2014; Moate & Cox, 2015).

Although Moate, Cox, et al. (2017) and Moate, Holm, and West (2017) focused on master’s-level versus doctoral-level students, their findings suggested the importance of instructor qualities and approaches as well as student perspectives within course design and delivery. Moate, Cox, et al. (2017) and Moate, Holm, and West (2017) did not link instructor qualities to the training they received within doctoral CETI coursework, but having an understanding of these connections may aid doctoral instructors’ design and delivery of CETI courses to better meet student needs.

Regarding instructor qualities and approaches to course delivery within doctoral CETI courses specifically, our literature search identified two studies that minimally addressed these components. Participants in the studies of both Waalkes et al. (2018) and Hunt and Weber Gilmore (2011) emphasized the importance of feedback from professors and classmates within CETI courses for strengthening their preparedness to teach. Neither study described exactly how this feedback supported their preparedness to teach, the type of feedback received, or the instructor’s approach to delivering feedback.

### **The Current Study**

Teaching preparation is an essential component of CEDS’ training (ACES, 2016), as teaching and related responsibilities (a) consume a greater proportion of time than any other responsibility of a counselor educator (Davis et al., 2006) and (b) impact CEDS’ confidence and feelings of preparedness to teach (Hall & Hulse, 2010; Suddeath et al., 2020). Still, some findings suggest a lack of rigor concerning teaching preparation compared to other core doctoral training areas (e.g., research and supervision; Waalkes et al., 2018). Although teaching preparation research in general is gaining momentum, there are no findings clarifying what components of formal coursework most support students’ development as teachers. In fact, findings are mixed regarding its effectiveness (e.g., Suddeath et al., 2020; Waalkes et al., 2018). Furthermore, no in-depth research exists on how counselor educators implement formal teaching courses within counselor education or how those teaching courses are designed and delivered by counselor educators and experienced by CEDS. Yet, our experience tells us and research confirms (e.g., Waalkes et al., 2018) that counselor education programs increasingly require CEDS to engage in CETI courses as one way to develop teaching competencies, with some citing it as the most widely utilized way in which programs train CEDS to teach (ACES, 2016; Barrio Minton & Price, 2015; Suddeath et al., 2020).

As variability exists in how respective programs deliver CETI courses (Hunt & Weber Gilmore, 2011), we studied a single CETI course as a way to illustrate an example of common issues and potential discrepancies faced by students and instructors engaged in a doctoral CETI course. We examined this course, taking into account both experienced instructor and novice student views, to (a) reveal common views on ideal course design, delivery, and evaluation components among participants navigating a common curriculum; (b) identify any similar or divergent views between the instructor and students; and (c) determine how to design course content and instruction to meet the future needs of students. The study was guided by the research question: What are instructor and student views on the essential design, delivery, and evaluation elements needed for a CETI course?

## Method

Q methodology is a unique research method containing the depth of qualitative data reduction and the objective rigor of by-person factor analysis (Brown, 1993). Researchers have effectively utilized this method in the classroom setting to facilitate personal discovery and to increase subject matter understanding (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Specifically, students' self-perspectives are investigated and then related to other students' views, which are then related to nuances within their own views (Good, 2003). Q methodology has also been effectively used as a pedagogical exercise to examine subjectivity in intensive samples of participants (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Focusing on intensive samples, and even single cases, allows researchers to retain participants' frames of reference while concurrently revealing nuances within their views, which may be lost within larger samples (Brown, 2019). Yet, the rigor of findings from intensive samples derived from Q factor analysis remains.

We selected Q methodology for the current study versus a qualitative or case study approach (Stake, 1995) to reveal common and divergent viewpoints in relation to common stimulus items (i.e., a Q sample composed of ideal design, delivery, and evaluation of CETI course components from the literature). We also wanted both the instructor and students participating in the sampled doctoral CETI course to provide their subjective views on the optimal design, delivery, and evaluation components of a doctoral CETI course, while incorporating the rigorous features of quantitative analysis (Brown, 1980).

### Concourse and Q Sample

Specific steps were taken to develop the *Q sample*, which is the set of statements used to assist participants with expressing their views during the Q-sorting process. The first step is selecting a *concourse*, which is a collection of opinion statements about any topic (Stephenson, 2014). Many routes of communication contribute to the form and content of a concourse (Brown, 1980). The concourse for this study was composed of statements taken by the authors from select teaching literature and documents (e.g., ACES, 2016; McAuliffe & Erickson, 2011; West et al., 2013). After carefully searching within these sources, researchers selected statements specifically containing teaching experts' views on essential components for teaching preparation, in general, and CETI courses in particular. The concourse selection process resulted in over 240 concourse statements, which was too many for the final Q sample (Brown, 1970, 1980).

Second, the concourse of statements was reduced by the first author using a structured deductive Q sample design shown in Table 1 (Brown, 1970). Data reduction using a structured design results in a reduction of concourse statements into a manageable Q sample (McKeown & Thomas, 2013). Accordingly, data reduction proceeded with the removal of unclear, fragmented, duplicate, or unrelated statements until there were eight items for each of the types, resulting in the structured 48-item sample shown in the Appendix.

**Table 1***Structured Q Sample*

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Types</i>	<i>N</i>	
1. Design	a. Materials (Items 4, 5, 10, 13, 14, 23, 28, 39)	b. Experiences (Items 3, 22, 24, 25, 36, 37, 43, 45)	2
2. Delivery	c. Content (Items 2, 15, 17, 18, 26, 27, 35, 38)	d. Process (Items 6, 8, 12, 30, 32, 41, 44, 46)	2
3. Evaluation	e. Formative (Items 7, 20, 21, 29, 33, 40, 42, 47)	f. Summative (Items 1, 9, 11, 16, 19, 31, 34, 48)	2

\*Q-set = D (Criteria) (Replications); D ([1<sub>2</sub>] [2<sub>2</sub>] [3<sub>2</sub>]) (n); D (2) (2) (2); D = 8 combinations;  
D (2) (2) (2) (6 replications); D = 48 statements for the Q sample.

Third, the 48-item Q sample was then evaluated by three expert reviewers using a content validity index (Paige & Morin, 2016). Expert reviewers who had a minimum of 10 years of experience as counselor educators, had designed and delivered doctoral CETI courses, had published frequently on teaching and learning, and were familiar with Q methodology were solicited by the first author. Accordingly, expert reviewers rated each of the 48 items on a 4-point scale using three criterion questions: 1) Is the statement clear and unambiguous as read by a counselor educator? 2) Is the statement clear and unambiguous as read by CEDS? and 3) Is the statement distinct from the other statements listed here? Items receiving a score of 3 ("Mostly") or 4 ("Completely") were included; items receiving a score of 2 ("Somewhat") were reviewed and modified by the authors for appropriateness; items receiving a score of 1 ("Not at all") were discarded from the sample. After the three expert evaluators completed the content validity index, the authors refined the Q sample by rewriting two items to improve clarity, eliminating one duplicate item, and adding an item the reviewers thought important. For the final step, two of the experts completed Q-sorts to assure the final Q sample facilitated the expression of views on supervisee roles. The results of these two pilot Q-sorts were not included in the data analysis.

**Participant Sample**

Researchers followed McKeown and Thomas' (2013) recommendations for selecting an intensive participant sample (i.e., fewer than 20 participants), which included a combination of purposeful and convenience sampling strategies (Patton, 2015) to obtain participants for the study. We purposefully selected the doctoral CETI course and the instructor because it was offered within a reputable, CACREP-accredited doctoral program; developed by a counselor educator known for teaching excellence and professional contributions; and taught and refined in an on-campus, in-person program by that same instructor for over 16 years. Additionally, the participants engaged in the course at the time of investigation constituted a convenience sample of eight first-year CEDS. Participants collectively represented a group of individuals holding similar theoretical interests and the ability to provide insight into the topic of investigation (Brown, 1993).

All nine participants were from a large, top-ranked counselor education program located in the Midwest. Seven of the students identified as White cisgender females, and one as a cisgender Asian

male. Four student participants were in the 25 to 30-year-old range, and four were in the 31 to 35-year-old range. The instructor was in the 50 to 55-year-old range, who identified as a White cisgender male. None of the student participants reported having previous teaching experience.

### Data Collection

After obtaining IRB permission, the first author collected the initial consent, demographic, Q-sort, and post-Q-sort written data from the students and instructor using a semi-structured questionnaire. The nine participants ( $n = 8$  students;  $n = 1$  instructor) were each asked to rank-order the 48 items in the Q sample along a forced choice grid from most agree (+4) to most disagree (-4). The conditions of instruction used for the students' and instructor's Q-sorts stemmed directly from the research question. After completing this Q-sort, participants were asked by the first author to provide written responses, using a semi-structured questionnaire, for the top three items with which they most (+4) and least (-4) agreed and were asked to comment on any other items of significance.

The first author asked the course instructor to respond in writing to three questions, in addition to those prompts contained in the semi-structured questionnaire. This was done to add nuance and context to the results. The additional questions and highlights from the instructor's responses are shown in Table 2.

### Data Analysis

Nine Q-sorts completed by participants were each entered into the PQMethod software program V. 2.35 (Schmolck, 2014). A correlation matrix was then generated reflecting the "nature and extent of relationships" among all the participants' Q-sorts in the data set (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 111). The correlation matrix served as the basis for factor analysis, which was completed using the centroid method (Brown, 1980). Essentially, factor analysis allows researchers to examine the correlation matrix for patterns of similarity among the participants' Q-sorts. In the current study, we were interested in similar and divergent patterns among the instructor's and students' Q-sorts on essential doctoral CETI course components. In other words, data analysis in Q studies is possible because all participants rank-order a Q sample of *similar* items, which allows researchers to inter-correlate those Q-sorts for subsequent factor analysis.

Given the low number of participants, we initially extracted five factors from the correlation matrix, which yielded fewer significant factor loadings (i.e., a correlation coefficient reflecting the degree to which a participant's Q-sort correlates with the factor). Therefore, we extracted three factors, which yielded a higher number of factor loadings. The three factors were rotated using the varimax method, which we selected because (a) we had no preconceived theoretical notions regarding the findings, (b) we were blind to participant identifying information in the data, and (c) we intended to obtain dominant views among participants within the same course (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The *varimax factor rotation method* helps researchers to identify individual factor loadings "whose positions closely approximate those of the factor" (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 142). In Q methodology, a *factor* is a composite or ideal Q-sort to which individual participants correlate (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Overall, data analysis steps yielded a 3-factor solution containing at least two significant factor loadings on each factor, which is the minimum suggested number of factor loadings for a factor to hold significance (Brown, 1980). Notably, the final 3-factor solution contained significant factor loadings for all nine of the study participants, which suggests the rigor of the collective viewpoints (i.e., factors) discussed in the results.

**Table 2***Summary of Instructor Responses*

Interview Question	Interview Responses (Factor A Exemplar)
1. What is important for planning, delivering, and evaluating doctoral-level counselor education teaching instruction courses?	I think of the different elements that go into teaching and I think these are the things that students need to be exposed to, such as: developing a teaching philosophy, creating a syllabus, evaluating other instructors' syllabi, making selections on textbooks, looking at equity in the classroom, backwards design of curriculum, having a small group teaching experience, having a large group teaching experience, using experiences in the classroom for developing reflective practice, and reviewing essential readings in the teaching field. I also think it is essential that we teach students how to use online platforms, so they have exposure and, to what degree we can, competency, to online platforms.
2. What are some significant lessons learned over the past 16 years as an instructor of a counselor education teaching instruction course?	<p>This course is a change in pace for most students in my program. For that reason, students generally seem excited about this course. Having them excited about taking the course makes teaching the course a pure joy. Along with the excitement, students bring a level of naïveté to the topic. They have been students, but they do not have a lot of exposure to being a teacher. In my field of counseling, students at the doctoral level have exposure to counseling, so they come in with a level of exposure and expertise in that area, but in teaching it seems all new to them. And that makes a course fun for me.</p> <p>I believe the hardest thing for students to learn is to set aside their own passions and misconceptions about what their students need to know in service of what they must know to be an effective counselor. What their passions are and what students need to know are not always the same thing. I notice students are generally apprehensive about their performance when it comes to teaching. I have to constantly remind myself that it doesn't come automatically to them as it does to me, having taught many years. So I have to reintroduce myself to the idea of performance anxiety in the classroom. That's where I think the in-class reflective practice piece fits in nicely for them. They get a chance to think and talk through their anxiety about teaching.</p>
3. What role does a counselor education teaching instruction course serve for preparing doctoral students to teach?	I can't imagine a program that does not have a teaching instruction course, preferably taught within the program, that would be able to adequately prepare students for future faculty roles. Most of my career has been to emphasize the need for good faculty instruction on teaching in the counseling field.

**Results**

The data analysis revealed three significantly different viewpoints (i.e., Factors A, B, and C) on the essential design, delivery, and evaluation elements needed for a doctoral CETI course. All participants in the study were significantly associated with one of the three factors. Specifically, one student participant and the course instructor were significantly associated with Factor A (i.e., had factor loadings of .37 or higher; .50 and .84, respectively). Five of the eight student participants were significantly associated with Factor B (.72, .70, .66, .78, and .60, respectively). Two of the eight student

participants were significantly associated with Factor C (.75 and .87, respectively). Select participant quotes from participants' post-sort questionnaires were incorporated into the factor interpretations below to provide contextual details for each factor.

### **Factor A: The Course Designer**

Factor A is most distinguished by the view that CETI courses should result in students having the ability to design their own counseling courses, which differs from Factors B and C (Item 37; +4, 0, 0, respectively). This pervasive opinion is contained in the instructor's semi-structured questionnaire response to Item 37:

I cannot imagine the purpose of having a course for teaching in counselor education without the purposeful outcome being to create a course. The ability to do course development, to me, is the skillset that doctoral graduates should have from a teaching course.

The student associated with this factor added, "I want this course to help me be successful, which means I have to practice . . . making a syllabus, working with students . . . the basis of the entire course is to learn to teach!" Learning how to design evaluations of the teaching and learning process (Item 48, +2) is also considered an essential CETI course component for Factor A. For Factor A, CETI courses need to include discussions about selecting textbooks (Item 14, +2) and opportunities to learn about classroom management (Item 18, +2). There was even stronger agreement that CETI courses need to include information about designing a syllabus (Item 39, +3) and constructing related course objectives (Item 33, +3), which would culminate in a plan for actual teaching experiences (Item 35, +3). Given the preference for technical and design elements in CETI courses, the authors have named Factor A *The Course Designer*.

Factor A placed less emphasis on the developmental level (Item 25, -3) and cultural differences (Item 38, -1) of students as essential components of a CETI course. But that does not suggest these elements are unimportant, as one participant illustrated: "All instructors need to be mindful of students' cultural differences. Learning can only be effective in an environment conducive of understanding students' differences." Importantly, the Factor A view was not limited to just design and technical components. In fact, Factor A, like B and C, viewed having some type of teaching experience as an essential element of a CETI course (Item 46; +4, +4, +1, respectively).

### **Factor B: The Future Educator**

The Factor B viewpoint, which the authors named *The Future Educator*, placed importance on the use of interactive (Item 6, +4) and experiential (Item 45, +3) activities, more so than course design, as essential elements of a CETI course. In contrast to Factors A (-4) and C (-4), Factor B participants believed in the helpfulness of teaching to their peers (Item 44, +2). However, Factor B was most distinguished from Factors A (+1) and C (-1) in its belief that CETI courses should prepare students for future faculty roles (Item 43, +4). Collectively, individuals on this factor all agreed that the role of a CETI course was to help them be successful as future faculty members, and as one student stated, "Students need to be prepared for future faculty roles including teaching, so students need to be prepared to teach."

Factor B differed from Factors A and C on the importance of evaluation of students' learning (Item 20, -1) and textbook selection (Item 14, -2), but agreed that videotaping students' experiences is not an essential component of CETI courses (Item 11, -4). Regarding Item 11, participants noted, "Video recordings may not demonstrate the entire experience, including feelings and opinions of students and teachers." Additionally, CEDS noted that being video-recorded could potentially "make students

in the class act differently,” and, “if there is live evaluation” contained in a CETI course, “including guided reflection and time to process feedback, then video isn’t necessary.” This is an interesting finding given that many of the participants were trained in counseling programs that used video work samples as the basis for supervision feedback related to counseling skills development.

### Factor C: The Empathic Instructor

Factor C represented a preference for instructor qualities and intentional communication (i.e., delivery) more so than design issues (Factor A) or future faculty preparation (Factor B). For instance, Factor C participants believed that instructors of CETI courses should be passionate about teaching (Item 30, +4), compared to -1 and 2 for Factors A and B, respectively. As one student put it, “I feel as though passion fuels everything else in the course: effort, preparation, and availability of the instructor. Passion is everything.” According to Factor C, CETI instructors should be approachable (Item 32, +4), model and demonstrate how to provide feedback for future student encounters (Item 26, +3), and check in often with students to determine their level of understanding (Item 21, +3). However, when designing, delivering, and evaluating CETI courses, Factor C participants highlighted the developmental level (Item 25, +2) and cultural differences (Item 38, +4) of students, which contrasts with Factors A and B. Factor C simply placed higher importance on these items compared to the other factors.

Factor C was also distinguished by what is not essential for a CETI course, such as planning for a teaching experience (Item 35, -1), processing fellow classmates’ teaching experiences (Item 29, -3), and being able to design evaluations of teaching and learning (Item 48, -4), which, as one participant stated, are “usually dictated by the institution where you are employed.” Factor C placed less emphasis on specific feedback (i.e., content-oriented) instructors provide to students on their teaching (Item 42, -1) in favor of the instructor’s approachability. As one participant described, “There is not growth without feedback . . . if the instructor is approachable then the student will feel as if they can approach the instructor with any concerns, including any items on this Q sample.” Given the preference for instructor qualities and communication, the authors have named Factor C *The Empathic Instructor*.

### Consensus

Despite the distinguishing perspectives contained in each individual factor, significant areas of consensus existed among factors with respect to particular Q sample items. For example, Factors A, B, and C believed that designing a syllabus is an important aspect of a CETI course (Item 39; +3, +3, and +2, respectively). All three factors commonly acknowledged that CETI course instructors ought to consider the pedagogy used for course delivery (Item 10; 0, +1, and +1, respectively), and that CETI courses should prepare doctoral students for teaching internships (Item 22; 0, +1, 0). CETI courses should address classroom management issues as well (Item 18; +2, +1, and 0, respectively). Finally, CETI courses should contain intentional student engagement efforts (Item 3; +2, +1, and +2) with regular and relevant discussions (Item 8; +1, +3, and +2, respectively).

Consensus among factors also existed around the *non-essential* elements of a CETI course. Specifically, all three factors expressed that midterm (Item 16; -3, -3, and -2, respectively) and final course exams (Item 19; -3, -4, and -3, respectively) were not essential components of a CETI course. One male participant summarized this point: “I think students’ progress can be evaluated by exploring what students think they learn, how much insight they gain, and how they plan to apply what they learn in the class, rather than using exams or pre/post-tests.” Similarly, another female participant cited, “Exams will not show progress in teaching skills. You need real life experiences and discussion.” Overall, participants across factors believed that exams promote memorization of content more so than the fair and commensurate evaluation of teaching knowledge and skills. In other words, they believed that CETI courses should be more experiential in nature.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the essential design, delivery, and evaluation elements needed for a CETI course. The results produced three unique views on this topic. In addition, although participants' views varied, with Factor A emphasizing the technical components of creating a course, Factor B emphasizing experiential components and future faculty roles, and Factor C emphasizing the character and qualities of the instructor, there were several areas of consensus. Specifically, participants across all three factors agreed on the importance of CETI courses for (a) preparing CEDS for teaching internships (Hunt & Weber Gilmore, 2011; Orr et al., 2008; Waalkes et al., 2018); (b) using pedagogy to guide CETI course delivery (ACES, 2016; Waalkes et al., 2018); (c) designing syllabi (Hall & Hulse, 2010; Hunt & Weber Gilmore, 2011); and (d) developing teaching skills such as classroom management, engaging students, and facilitating class discussions (Hall & Hulse, 2010; Hunt & Weber Gilmore, 2011; Waalkes et al., 2018). As indicated above, these points of consensus align with previous counselor education literature, including participants' desire for CETI courses to prepare them for teaching as counselor educators (Baltrinic et al., 2016).

An expected finding within Factor C is the influence of the instructor's qualities (e.g., approachability and passion) and delivery (e.g., seminar format) on participants' views of the CETI course (Moate, Cox, et al., 2017). The instructor delivered the course in a seminar format emphasizing student leadership for content sharing and de-emphasizing the use of lecture, which relates to consensus factor scores on Item 40, "In a teaching course, I should be evaluated on my ability to do a lecture." However, it is unclear from the data how participants understood the purpose or role of lectures for engaging students in the classroom. It is notable to mention, however, that participants delivered counseling content to master's-level students as part of their teaching experiences for the course and would thus benefit from feedback on their performance.

Many have suggested that utilizing lecture as the principal mode of delivery fosters passive learning and does not necessarily support students' engagement in course content or development of decision-making, problem-solving, or critical-thinking skills (e.g., Malott et al., 2014; Moate & Cox, 2015). Participants in Waalkes et al.'s (2018) study indicated that their training primarily equipped them to lecture, which they reported did not fully prepare them for their roles as educators. Although Moate and Cox (2015) do not recommend utilizing lecture as the only method for helping students engage with course content, both they and Brookfield (2015) emphasized the false dichotomy that exists between teacher-centered approaches, which are typically characterized by lecturing, and learner-centered approaches, which often rely on using discussions as a primary mode of teaching.

Rather than dismissing lectures entirely, instructors can utilize lectures to provide a broad overview of the course content, to explain difficult or complex concepts with frequent examples, to generate students' engagement and interest in a topic, and/or to model the types of skills and dispositions instructors would like to foster in students (Brookfield, 2015; Malott et al., 2014; Moate & Cox, 2015). Thus, lectures can serve as a starting point to model and frame course content for further discussion and application using other teaching methods (Moate & Cox, 2015). Overall, we believe that it is important for students to possess a variety of teaching methods for engaging students with course content and understand when and how to apply various methods effectively, which requires CETI instructor feedback and support.

Surprising results included participants' low rankings of Item 12 regarding the importance of role-playing, of Item 7 regarding the importance of peer feedback, and of Item 11 regarding the use of video recordings of teaching—this latter finding contrasts with participant responses in Hunt and

Weber Gilmore's (2011) study, who found "sharing and critiquing a video of us teaching" an especially valuable component of their coursework (p. 147). Current counselor education research consistently affirms the importance and reported desire for formal coursework to incorporate practical teaching components related to the actual work of a counselor educator (Hall & Hulse, 2010; Hunt & Weber Gilmore, 2011). Instructors who employ learner-centered approaches often emphasize the role of peers and the use of peer feedback to enhance student learning (Moate & Cox, 2015). It could be that participants assumed that role-plays pertain to practicing counseling-related interventions. As such, it may prove helpful if counselor educators consider situational uses for role-plays, such as a way of managing difficult situations in the classroom (e.g., classroom management), or for addressing sensitive topics related to multicultural concerns, among others (Hunt & Weber Gilmore, 2011). Instructors can model how to facilitate these skills, which can be followed up with dyadic or triadic student role-plays.

Additionally, participants did not place importance on peer feedback over the instructor's feedback or learning how to provide feedback to their future students in the instructor role. Instead, participants favored feedback from the instructor on their own teaching skills, the proposition here being that instructors can provide feedback from a position of experience, more so than peers who do not have teaching experience. It is plausible that CEDS attending CETI courses need feedback about *how* to provide feedback and perceive this as an important teaching skill (Hunt & Weber Gilmore, 2011). This is important because students in CETI courses are likely (a) learning the course-related content *and* (b) learning the pedagogy for delivering counseling-related content in their future classrooms (ACES, 2016).

### Implications

Findings support two important implications for counselor educators, the first of which is illustrated by the instructor from this study: "What students' passions are and what students need to know are not always the same thing." One can reasonably expect discrepancies between the perceptions of the instructor and those of students as evidenced by some participants' dissatisfaction with the content and delivery of their CETI courses (e.g., Hall & Hulse, 2010; Waalkes et al., 2018). However, we encourage counselor educators as they teach to consider students' views (i.e., factors) even if they feel their own views and curriculum support best practice. We also acknowledge that some instructors may have limited autonomy in the construction of CETI course syllabi and assignments because of accreditation requirements.

In thinking about the implications for counselor educators, to the extent possible, tailoring a CETI course to the reported preferences/needs of the students seems essential for preparing them for future teaching (Waalkes et al., 2018) as well as for increasing student engagement (e.g., Moate & Cox, 2015). For example, counselor educators can incorporate technology, curricular, and course design elements into CETI courses (Factor A). Counselor educators can link teaching experiences to future faculty roles by exploring them in the context of accreditation requirements, their impact on tenure and promotion practices (Davis et al., 2006), and managing teaching loads in the context of other duties and institutional demands (Silverman, 2003; Factor B). Finally, counselor educators can incorporate Factor C views into their CETI courses by attending to the instructor qualities, modeling passion, demonstrating approachability, and frequently checking in on students' progress (Malott et al., 2014). Additionally, the authors suggest that counselor educators incorporate aspects of all three factors into their own teaching practice and link the CETI course to future supervised teaching experiences such as teaching practicum or internships as suggested by Waalkes et al. (2018).

Second, counselor educators should obtain and incorporate CEDS' perspectives early when designing, delivering, and evaluating CETI courses, which can be helpful for investigating (formally or informally)

the impact of those instructional strategies and curriculum on CEDS' teaching skill development and is recommended as a best practice by Malott et al. (2014). It is common practice to collect student opinions of instruction at the end of the semester, and many instructors collect ongoing data on how students are progressing in the semester. Q methodology could be used in ways similar to this study to help instructors positively influence CEDS' learning. Additionally, counselor educators could utilize Q methodology to identify factors and use those factors to improve their own performance, to design other teaching-related courses, and to affect CEDS' classroom experiences and learning outcomes. Counselor educators could also compare their CETI courses with other instructors' courses to see trends or use Q methodology to identify factors within or between CETI courses over time.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Q methodology studies gather and rigorously analyze data to reveal common viewpoints among participants. Factors do not generalize in Q studies the same way as findings from traditional factor analysis (i.e., R methodology; Brown, 1980). Rather, factors are simply collections of opinion, the structure of which may or may not exist in other counselor education settings. However, CETI instructors can test this proposition by having students in other CETI courses complete Q-sorts with the current Q sample or by developing and testing relevant Q samples of their own design. In fact, because the Q sample was used in one class, researchers are encouraged to test propositions with larger samples across programs to see if the factors exist in multiple settings. Finally, because the participants in the current study were a convenience sample from a brick-and-mortar program composed mostly of White females within a single course, participant diversity was lacking. Future studies could examine the views of students of color and international students in larger samples across multiple courses and multiple formats (e.g., online and hybrid programs).

Additional conditions of instruction could be added to expand teaching instruction viewpoints using a single-case design approach (Baltrinic et al., 2018). Supporting Q findings with qualitative information from in-depth interviews from student and instructor factor exemplars would add more nuance to the existing factors as well. Finally, following in our footsteps, researchers could develop and administer their own teaching instruction Q-sorts before beginning a CETI course to tailor the development and delivery of the course to the needs of their students. This would allow CETI instructors to develop studies, which may reveal idiosyncratic and shared experiences (Stephenson, 2014) related to programs' CETI course design, delivery, and evaluation.

### **Conclusion**

We proposed in this article that doctoral CETI courses offer a starting point for CEDS' teaching preparation. We elaborated further that despite accreditation guidelines and the anecdotal experiences of counselor educators in various programs, little is known about what specifically to include in a CETI doctoral course. Counselor educators and CEDS alike can honor course variability, anecdotal experiences, and academic freedoms, while providing some structure to their CETI courses. This goal can be achieved by acknowledging that CETI course design, delivery, and evaluation include professional-level, student, and instructor perspectives. The Q factors in the current study revealed one way to include multiple perspectives and to identify preferred and recognizable CETI course components.

### ***Conflict of Interest and Funding Disclosure***

The authors reported no conflict of interest or funding contributions for the development of this manuscript.

## References

- Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. (2016). *ACES Teaching Initiative Taskforce best practices in teaching in counselor education report 2016*. <https://acesonline.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ACES-Teaching-Initiative-Taskforce-Final-Report-2016.pdf>
- Baltrinic, E. R., Jencius, M., & McGlothlin, J. (2016). Coteaching in counselor education: Preparing doctoral students for future teaching. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 55*(1), 31–45. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ceas.12031>
- Baltrinic, E. R., Moate, R. M., Hinkle, M. G., Jencius, M., & Taylor, J. Z. (2018). Counselor educators' teaching mentorship styles: A Q methodology study. *The Professional Counselor, 8*(1), 46–59. <https://doi.org/10.15241/erb.8.1.46>
- Barrio Minton, C. A., & Price, E. (2015, October). *Teaching the teacher: An analysis of teaching preparation in counselor education doctoral programs*. Presentation session presented at the meeting of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Biannual Conference, Philadelphia, PA.
- Brookfield, S. D. (2015). *The skillful teacher: On technique, trust, and responsiveness in the classroom* (3rd ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Brown, S. R. (1970). On the use of variance designs in Q methodology. *The Psychological Record, 20*, 179–189. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03393928>
- Brown, S. R. (1980). *Political subjectivity: Applications of Q methodology in political science*. Yale University Press.
- Brown, S. R. (1993). A primer on Q methodology. *Operant Subjectivity, 16*(3/4), 91–138. <https://doi.org/10.15133/j.os.1993.002>
- Brown, S. R. (2019). Subjectivity in the human sciences. *The Psychological Record, 69*, 565–579. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40732-019-00354-5>
- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (2015). *2016 CACREP standards*. <http://www.cacrep.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2016-Standards-with-citations.pdf>
- Davis, T. E., Levitt, D. H., McGlothlin, J. M., & Hill, N. R. (2006). Perceived expectations related to promotion and tenure: A national survey of CACREP program liaisons. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 46*(2), 146–156. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2006.tb00019.x>
- Good, J. M. M. (2003). William Stephenson, quantum theory, and Q methodology. *Operant Subjectivity, 26*(4), 142–156. <https://doi.org/10.15133/j.os.2003.009>
- Hall, S. F., & Hulse, D. (2010). Perceptions of doctoral level teaching preparation in counselor education. *The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision, 1*(2), 2–15. <https://doi.org/10.7729/12.0108>
- Hunt, B., & Weber Gilmore, G. (2011). Learning to teach: Teaching internships in counselor education and supervision. *The Professional Counselor, 1*(2), 143–151. <https://doi.org/10.15241/bhh.1.2.143>
- Lanning, W. (1990). An educator/practitioner model for counselor education doctoral programs. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 30*(2), 163–169. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.1990.tb01193.x>
- Malott, K. M., Hall, K. H., Sheely-Moore, A., Krell, M. M., Cardaciotto, L. (2014). Evidence-based teaching in higher education: Application to counselor education. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 53*(4), 294–305. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2014.00064.x>
- McAuliffe, G. J., & Erickson, K. (Eds.). (2011). *Handbook of counselor preparation: Constructivist, developmental, and experiential approaches*. SAGE.
- McKeown, B., & Thomas, D. B. (2013). *Q methodology* (2nd ed.). SAGE.
- Moate, R. M., & Cox, J. A. (2015). Learner-centered pedagogy: Considerations for application in a didactic course. *The Professional Counselor, 5*(3), 379–389. <http://doi.org/10.15241/rmm.5.3.379>
- Moate, R. M., Cox, J. A., Brown, S. R., & West, E. M. (2017). Perceptions of helpfulness of teachers in didactic courses. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 56*(4), 242–258. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ceas.12083>
- Moate, R. M., Holm, J. M., & West, E. M. (2017). Perceived helpfulness of teachers in clinical courses. *The Professional Counselor, 7*(2), 155–168. <https://doi.org/10.15241/rmm.7.2.155>
- Olguin, D. L. C. (2004). *Determinants of preparation through perceptions of counseling and teaching self-efficacy among prospective counselor educators* (Order No. 3127784). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

- Orr, J. J., Hall, S. F., & Hulse-Killacky, D. (2008). A model for collaborative teaching teams in counselor education. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 47*(3), 146–163. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2008.tb00046.x>
- Paige, J. B., & Morin, K. H. (2016). Q-sample construction: A critical step for a Q-methodological study. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 38*(1), 96–110. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193945914545177>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Schmolck, P. (2014). PQMethod (Version 2.35). [Computer Software]. <http://schmolck.userweb.mwn.de/qmethod>
- Silverman, S. (2003). The role of teaching in the preparation of future faculty. *Quest, 55*(1), 72–81. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2003.10491790>
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. SAGE.
- Stephenson, W. (2014). General theory of communication. *Operant Subjectivity: The International Journal of Q Methodology, 37*(3), 38–56. <https://doi.org/10.15133/j.os.2014.011>
- Suddeath, E., Baltrinic, E., & Dugger, S. (2020). The impact of teaching preparation practices on self-efficacy toward teaching. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 59*(1), 59–73. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ceas.12166>
- Tollerud, T. R. (1990). *The perceived self-efficacy of teaching skills of advanced doctoral students and graduates from counselor education programs* (Order No. 9112495). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Waalkes, P. L., Benschhoff, J. M., Stickl, J., Swindle, P. J., & Umstead, L. K. (2018). Structure, impact, and deficiencies of beginning counselor educators' doctoral teaching preparation. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 57*(1), 66–80. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ceas.12094>
- Watts, S., & Stenner, P. (2012). *Doing Q methodological research: Theory, method and interpretation*. SAGE.
- West, J. D., Bubenzer, D. L., Cox, J. A., & McGlothlin, J. M. (Eds.). (2013). *Teaching in counselor education: Engaging students in learning*. Association for Counselor Education and Supervision.

## Appendix

### College Teaching Q Sample Statements and Factor Array

#	Q Sample Statement	A	B	C
1	Peers should be able to review the courses I develop as part of a teacher training course.	-1	-2	-2
2	Teacher training courses should have case examples.	-2	0	1
3	Designing student engagement is important for a course on teaching.	2	1	2
4	Courses in teacher training should have relevant technology resources.	1	-2	-2
5	Learning how to assess students' learning is important in a teaching course.	3	0	2
6	Courses in teacher training should have interactive activities.	0	4	1
7	I should have student feedback for the classes I teach while a student in a teacher training course.	-2	0	2
8	Teacher training courses should have relevant discussion.	1	3	2
9	Teacher training courses should have student feedback mechanisms for the instructor.	0	0	0
10	A teaching course should consider the pedagogy used for course delivery.	0	1	1
11	I believe that my teaching should be videoed in my teacher training course.	-1	-4	-1
12	Having role-plays on teaching is important for a teaching course.	-4	-3	0
13	Teaching instruction courses should incorporate adult learning theories.	0	-1	0
14	Selecting a textbook is an important part of learning in a teaching course.	2	-2	1
15	Content in teacher training courses should be up to date.	-1	1	-1
16	Teacher training courses should have midterm evaluations of my work in the course.	-3	-3	-2
17	Teacher training courses should have breakout groups.	-3	-3	-3
18	Teacher training courses should address classroom management.	2	1	0
19	Teacher training courses should have course exams.	-3	-4	-3
20	A method to evaluate students' learning is important to course design.	2	-1	1
21	Instructors of teacher training courses should check in often with students to determine their level of understanding.	-1	0	3
22	Teaching instruction courses should prepare students for teaching internships.	0	1	0
23	Teacher training courses should have assigned readings on varied aspects of teaching and learning.	1	-2	-1

24	Considering students' personal and cultural characteristics is important in designing a teaching course.	0	2	1
25	Considering students' developmental level is important in designing a teaching course.	-3	-1	2
26	Learning how to provide feedback to future students is important for a teaching course.	1	0	3
27	In a teacher training course, I should be expected to create a teaching philosophy.	4	1	3
28	Teacher training classes should have supplemental learning materials.	-1	-2	-2
29	I should process fellow classmates' teaching experiences as a part of a teacher training course.	1	-1	-3
30	The instructor in a teacher training course should be passionate about teaching.	-1	2	4
31	In a teacher training course, I should be able to design a teaching instruction course.	-4	-1	-4
32	Instructors of teacher training courses should be approachable.	0	2	4
33	Creating course objectives are important to a teaching course.	3	0	3
34	Teacher training courses should have pre/posttest of students' learning.	-2	-4	-3
35	Planning for a teaching experience is an important part of the course.	3	2	-1
36	Portions of teacher training courses should include lectures.	-2	-1	-2
37	In a teacher training course, I should be able to design a counseling course.	4	0	0
38	Instructors of teacher training courses should anticipate students' cultural differences.	-1	2	4
39	Designing a syllabus is an important aspect of a teaching course.	3	3	2
40	In a teaching course I should be evaluated on my ability to do a lecture.	-2	1	0
41	Decisions on how you will use media are important in designing a teacher training course.	0	-2	-2
42	Instructors of teacher training courses should provide appropriate feedback to students on teaching.	2	3	-1
43	Teaching instruction courses should prepare students for future faculty roles.	1	4	-1
44	In a teaching training course, I should have the opportunity to teach to my peers.	-4	2	-4
45	Experiential activities are important in a teaching instruction course.	1	3	0
46	Having a teaching experience is important for a course on teaching.	4	4	1
47	In a teacher training course, I should be able to use technology to collect evaluation data.	-2	-3	-2
48	In a teacher training course, I should be able to design evaluations of teaching and learning.	2	-1	-4