Counselor Educators' Strategies for Success

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Fourteen counselor educators identified strategies for research, teaching, and service activities. Responses were analyzed for themes, which were presented as recommendations for counselor educators. Recommendations included developing a disciplined, focused, and collaborative approach to research. Strategies for effective teaching included using multiple teaching methods, taking a student-centered approach, and keeping current in one's field. Recommendations for participation in service activities included using effective interpersonal skills, appreciating multiple perspectives, and following through on one's commitments. Additional strategies for balancing time, overcoming obstacles, and coping with multiple life roles are presented.

Multiple role expectations (e.g., writing for publication, teaching, participating in service activities) confront counselor educators on a daily basis. Not surprisingly, many counselor educators experience significant stress as they attempt to cope with these role demands. For some faculty members, the stress associated with these role expectations is exacerbated by role overload, lack of collegial support, insufficient feedback, insufficient rewards and recognition, inadequate resources for completing work tasks, and conflicting life role demands (Sorcinelli, 1994). Many graduate students in counseling and related programs wonder about how to manage a career in academia (Morgeson, Seligman, Sternberg, Taylor, & Manning, 1999).

Institutional responses to these concerns include offering orientation programs for new faculty and providing structured learning opportunities for ongoing faculty development in the areas of teaching and research. Perhaps the most typical response to helping new faculty members is to provide them with more senior faculty mentors (Sorcinelli, 1994).

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Benefits of Mentoring

One way in which faculty mentors help their protégés is by sharing the insights they have acquired throughout their careers. Protégés can learn from the experiences that senior faculty share relative to how to successfully perform the tasks confronting those in the professorate. Researchers investigating the benefits experienced by protégés in the mentoring relationship report that protégés tend to be more satisfied in their work and more successful in achieving promotions than those workers without mentors (Brinson & Kottler, 1993; Dalton, Thompson, & Price, 1977; Robinson, 1994; Sorcinelli, 1994; Wright & Wright, 1987). More specifically, Phillips-Jones (1982) suggested that mentors help their protégés by sharing knowledge and expertise, providing emotional support, serving as successful role models, advocating for their protégés, and working collaboratively with their protégés in the areas of teaching and research.

Unfortunately, not all faculty members have the opportunity to work with mentors (Morgeson et al., 1999). Furthermore, Brinson and Kottler (1993) argued that the lack of access to mentoring that many minority counselor educators experience may be a significant reason for lower rates of minority faculty earning tenure as compared with nonminority faculty members (who often have more access to mentors). Counselor educators without access to senior faculty members are often forced to self-navigate their professional responsibilities, thereby placing them at a disadvantage compared with those working with mentors (Sorcinelli, 1994).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to share strategies for successfully performing the primary tasks confronting counselor educators. By sharing their knowledge and expertise related to the questions posed in this study, the participants provide an important mentoring function to other counselor educators (Phillips-Jones, 1982). Themes emerging from participant responses can be considered for adoption by counselor educators who are seeking strategies for managing their work-related tasks.

Method

Participants

To identify strategies for successful performance as a counselor educator, we interviewed a purposeful sample of nationally recognized counselor educators. The sample was not intended to be
representative of all counselor educators. Rather, we constructed a list of prominent counselor educators based on their contributions in the areas of research or service to the profession. Our list included individuals who had recently served as a president of a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA), a president of ACA, an editor of a journal from one of ACA's divisions, or who had authored textbooks used in counselor training. We also focused on senior counselor educators whom we defined as individuals who were full professors and had a minimum of 15 years of experience as a counselor educator. We then narrowed the list of potential participants based on variables such as race, sex, and geographical location of the university where the potential participant was employed. Of the limited list of 20 counselor educators whom we invited to participate in the study, 14 agreed (8 White men, 3 African American men, and 3 White women). The others each expressed regret about being unable to participate because of time constraints.

Participants in the study ranged in age from 48 to 69 (M = 61). All participants were active in the counselor education field at the time of the study, and most were employed at Carnegie I (n = 10) or Carnegie II (n = 2) research universities. Two participants were employed at a Master's I institution. All participants noted that teaching, research, and service were important criteria in faculty evaluations at their respective institutions. All participants had substantial records in the areas of scholarship (i.e., a record of scholarship that warranted promotion to full professor, a record of authoring refereed journal articles over a time period greater than 15 years, authorship of a textbook, and appointment to multiple journal editorial boards over the course of their careers) and service (e.g., election to multiple leadership roles within ACA over the course of their careers). Perhaps due in part to their accomplishments, researchers detected no differences in participants' responses based on institutional affiliation.

**Structured Interview**

Participants were asked seven questions related to their success as counselor educators. Interview questions were designed to focus on the three primary role expectations and promotion criteria for faculty members in higher education: research, teaching, and service. In addition to asking the participants to share their strategies for successful performance in research, teaching, and service (Questions 1, 2, and 3, respectively), we also asked them how they balanced their time across the three areas of research, teaching, and service (Question 4). Because doctoral-level training in counselor education does not typically include such information, we thought
that this information would be of special interest to prospective and new counselor educators. Question 5 focused on identifying obstacles (and strategies to overcome the obstacles) that participants have encountered in their research, teaching, and service activities. Challenging situations are inevitable in any occupation; information regarding the obstacles encountered by the participants and their strategies for coping with these obstacles would be useful for counselor educators at all levels of professional development. Question 6 was more general and, therefore, designed to elicit any valuable insights the successful counselor educators in our study had learned throughout their careers. Finally, we wanted to know whether the participants had developed strategies for coping effectively with multiple life role demands (e.g., community service, leisure, partners, family) while devoting a significant amount of their time to work (Question 7). Because “success comes at a price,” we wanted to know whether the participants had developed strategies for minimizing the costs involved in their career advancement or if, in retrospect, they had words of wisdom to share regarding how to cope effectively with demands from multiple life roles.

After the initial data collection and analysis, participants were invited to provide additional in-depth comments to the preliminary findings. Finally, participants were provided a copy of the results for audit purposes.

Researchers and Researcher Bias

The three primary researchers (the authors of this article included one full professor and two counselor education doctoral students (one male and one female) from a large research university in the Southeast. Although each researcher was interested in learning from those interviewed, each also had assumptions about requirements to be a successful counselor educator (e.g., “success as a counselor educator is largely dependent upon success as a researcher”). In addition, all of the researchers were White. Each of these factors may have contributed to researcher bias influencing the results of the study.

Procedure

Interview participants were recruited for the study by a letter explaining the purpose of the research. Each was offered anonymity. Structured interviews were conducted by phone or electronic mail, depending on participants' availability and preference. In all, five phone interviews and nine electronic mail interviews were conducted. After initial data analysis, unstructured follow-up inquiries (member checking) were conducted by mail.
All interviews were transcribed. Data were content analyzed to identify the emergent themes in the interview participants' responses. Because categories in a content analysis should be completely exhaustive and mutually exclusive (Holsti, 1969), a step classification system was used. First, each participant's response was broken into meaning units. Meaning units are defined as perceived shifts in the attitude or example of a response or a shift in the emotional quality of a response (Giorgi, 1985). Giorgi noted that meaning units are not seen as independent, but rather as expressions of aspects of the whole response. For example, responding to the question pertaining to strategies that have been helpful in achieving success as a teacher, one participant stated, "Life experiences taught me that failure does not have to be fatal. By following my interests and working very hard I became a better teacher." This response could be viewed as containing two meaning units: "Life experiences taught me that failure does not have to be fatal" and "By following my interests and working very hard I became a better teacher" because the response contains a perceived shift in the focus of the interview participant's answer. The transcript is divided into meaning units “to allow the researcher to psychologically examine and describe meaningful constituents of the experience, staying as close to the data as possible” (Seidman, 1991, p. 69).

Each researcher conducted a preliminary and independent content analysis of the interview participants' responses. Then, working collaboratively, the researchers assigned a label to each meaning unit using either exact language or language that closely resembled the meaning of the participant. Each coding was also triangulated for general agreement among the researchers.

After the inductive process was complete, meaning units were coded and tabulated for all responses to a specific question. Next, the researchers examined each coding for its thematic meaning and collapsed coded content into larger themes. Larger themes were identified from the most frequent responses emerging from the initial content coding. Several responses that did not collapse into larger categories were judged atypical and discarded. For example, when asked the question about balancing one's time, one participant stated that "my job is a 24-hour-a-day, 12-months-a-year job." This statement was clarified by the respondent as an exaggeration of the point and, thus, was not included in the coding. Another participant when asked whether obstacles had been encountered responded, "Yes, but they require much time to expand, and there have been none that I have not managed." Another participant's strategy for overcoming obstacles was to "wait for the latest nerd of an administrator to leave and pray the next one was going to be better." Because these responses were atypical when compared
with the entire data set, they were not collapsed into larger themes. Thus, researchers synthesized meaning units into a general statement or response to the structured interview question. This allowed identification of common themes within the responses, which were then presented as strategies that counselor educators could use to manage their careers effectively.

In addition, a data audit was completed to ensure agreement among the categories identified by the researchers. The auditor was a counselor education doctoral student with clinical, research, and teaching experience. The auditor did not participate in any other aspect of the research study.

Results

Question 1: What strategies have been most helpful to you in achieving success as a researcher?

A total of 64 meaning units were identified from the responses to research Question 1. Twenty-three responses (36% of the total) focused on the need for counselor educators to develop a disciplined approach to scholarship (e.g., “I am disciplined in that I set time aside each day to write”), 16 responses (25%) recommended that counselor educators work collaboratively on research projects (e.g., “Writing with other people and doing research projects has helped motivate me and made the quality of my work enormously better”), 10 responses (16%) focused on the need for counselor educators to identify a focused program of research based on your interests (e.g., “Counselor educators should discover what excites them and make a decision based on this rather than focusing on where they will make money or what is in fashion currently”), 9 (14%) responses advised counselor educators to focus your professional activities (e.g., “I can be more thorough, my work can have more depth, and the work can thus have more meaning when I have the focus to really know the literature and really struggle with the design”), and 6 responses (9%) suggested that it is important to practice and refine the craft of writing (e.g., “In terms of my scholarship, I have learned to write and rewrite”).

Question 2: What strategies have been most helpful to you in achieving success as a teacher?

Four themes emerged from the classification of the 55 total meaning units identified from the responses to research Question 2. Twenty responses (37% of the total) indicated that the participants thought it was important to use multiple teaching strategies, (e.g., “I integrate
minilectures with videos, role plays, and games”). Sixteen responses (29%) indicated that successful teachers take a student-centered approach to their teaching (e.g., “Students come alive when they feel that the professor believes in them as a person and as scholars in their own right”), 15 responses (27%) advised counselor educators to keep your knowledge current (e.g., “certainly being up-to-date on whatever the area is, is also very important”), and 4 responses (7%) indicated that successful teachers tend to develop positive attitudes toward teaching and learning (e.g., “I am also just plain fascinated with the learning process”).

**Question 3: What strategies have been most helpful to you in achieving success in service activities?**

The classification of responses to Question 3 resulted in six categories representing strategies for success in the area of service. Of the 51 total responses, 12 (24% of the total) indicated that it is important for counselor educators to use effective interpersonal skills when participating in service activities (e.g., “The thing that has helped me be successful in service activities, whether it was serving as president of the faculty senate or as president of ACA, was my ability to work with people rather than against them. I have been able to manage successfully because I could continue to value participants on both sides of the issue and assist persons on both sides to see merit in some aspect of what the other had to say”), 10 responses (20%) suggested that counselor educators should take advantage of opportunities to participate in service activities (e.g., “Take opportunities when they come along . . . if someone invites you to do it, go for it. Never turn anything down in terms of a committee appointment or whatever, particularly if it is an area that you are interested in”), 9 responses (18%) indicated that it is important to network with other counselor educators to increase opportunities for service participation (e.g., “Get to know the best people in the field”), 9 responses (18%) suggested that it is important to make a commitment to participate in service activities (e.g., “Realize that everyone has an obligation to serve our profession”), 6 participant responses (11%) recommended that counselor educators avoid overcommitting to service activities (e.g., “To be sure, some work on committees is essential in academic life, but I guard against spreading myself [so] thin that I become fragmented”), and 5 responses (9%) highlighted the fact that it is important to follow through on your commitments to develop a positive reputation as a reliable contributor (e.g., “The most important thing is that when you accept one of these positions on a board or on a committee that you do the job”).
Question 4: How do you balance your time among the three areas of teaching, research, and service?

The classification of responses to Question 4 resulted in three categories representing strategies for balancing professional responsibilities. Of the 35 total responses, 15 (43% of the total) indicated that it is important to be systematic in allocating time to scholarship (e.g., "I try to structure time for scholarship every week"), 13 responses (37%) advised counselor educators to carefully prioritize your research activities (e.g., "I weigh each activity according to my interests and its ultimate payoff in satisfaction/contribution"), and 7 responses (20%) indicated that it is important to integrate scholarship into your teaching and service activities (e.g., "I find that when I read and write about counseling, I am a better teacher").

Question 5: What obstacles have you encountered in the areas of research, teaching, and service and how have you overcome each obstacle?

Of the 29 obstacles identified from the responses to Question 5, 10 (34% of the total) were classified as interpersonal challenges (e.g., "There was an editor that did not like my research agenda or perspective"), 9 (31%) as institutional challenges (e.g., "I think an obstacle for some of our younger people, because of university pressures to secure external funding, is that if you don’t happen to have an area in which there are grants, then there is pressure to go in another area which takes you away from your own area"), 6 responses (21%) as professional challenges (e.g., "Time, time, time. There is just not enough time for everything. The struggle of trying to figure out where to put the emphasis of the many options"), and 4 (14%) as intrapersonal challenges (e.g., "I experienced a lack of confidence").

Of the 14 strategies recommended for overcoming interpersonal challenges, 6 indicated that it is important to process and learn from negative interpersonal experiences (e.g., "I try to learn from each negative interaction. When manuscripts are rejected, I try to put myself in the reviewer’s place"), 4 responses advised counselor educators to persist in resolving interpersonal difficulties (e.g., "With difficulties in working with an editor, I keep resubmitting and refining. I once went through three editors [9 years of trying] before I got a particular manuscript accepted in the journal in which I wanted to have it published"), 2 suggested that counselor educators focus on the positives in interactions (e.g., "To quote the lyrics of a 1930s tune, I try to accentuate the positives and elimi-
nate the negatives"), and 2 responses recommended that counselor educators avoid personalizing interpersonal difficulties (e.g., "Try your best to absorb these things as best you can, but it's hard, very hard").

Thirteen strategies were identified for overcoming institutional challenges. Three of these strategies included the suggestion to have a plan or vision for what you want to accomplish (e.g., "It's hard to explain, but I had a vision. I seemed to be able to see what was needed, what was practical, and what would work"). 3 responses encouraged counselor educators to be persistent in overcoming institutional challenges (e.g., "Persist in dealing with the powers that be to see that a project is implemented. Persistence is critical"), 3 responses advised counselor educators to be self-reliant in finding the resources to do your work (e.g., "There are so many needs but where is the money to be able to do the work—so some of it must be self-funded"), and 2 responses recommended that counselor educators network (e.g., "Getting your name out, knowing people, interacting, that is just so important") to overcome institutional challenges. In addition, 1 respondent advised counselor educators to choose their battles carefully (e.g., "I think we need to choose our battles carefully and assess the price we pay for striving for certain projects"), and 1 respondent recommended that counselor educators seek to understand and reframe racism as an institutional deficiency (e.g., "Since I as a single person could not make it go away, I had to change my view of it and how it might affect my existence. I refused to believe that there was something wrong with me. Instead, I tried to learn what was wrong with the society that embodied racism, the same society of which I was a product. In so doing, I became bigger than the negative factor, racism").

Three strategies were recommended for overcoming professional challenges. Two participants noted that it is important to learn to set limits in your activities (e.g., "Basically, the way I have overcome that is just to say no. I can't do it, it is not my area"), to be self-directed in your activities (e.g., "You have to have an internal compass... that keeps you pointed in a direction"), and 1 participant noted that it is very important to engage in self-care activities (e.g., "I try to engage in activities that are good for me and that help me reduce stress such as exercising and eating right").

Finally, three strategies for overcoming intrapersonal challenges were to work collaboratively with others (e.g., "In my research, I partnered up with others who knew something that I did not"), participate as a client in therapy (e.g., "To build my confidence in teaching, I went to a clinical psychologist for hypnosis to overcome my anxiety"), and participate in training activities for skill
development (e.g., "In scholarship, I took research courses to increase my skills and knowledge").

**Question 6:** What recommendations would you offer to new counselor educators concerning the successful management of their careers?

Four themes emerged from the classification of 51 responses to Question 6. Twenty responses (39% of the total) recommended that new counselor educators continually **participate in professional growth activities** (e.g., "An effective educator must be a perpetual learner—both about one's subject and about one's own life"), 12 responses (24%) encouraged new counselor educators to **nurture and develop professional relationships** (e.g., "A key recommendation I have pertaining to managing a professional career is to find respected colleagues and devise ways of including colleagues in various facets of one's career. Working alone can be lonely and isolating"), 12 responses (24%) suggested that it is important to **demonstrate positive work habits** (e.g., "Be diligent and purposeful. Don't give up easily. Most importantly, be yourself"), and 7 responses (13%) recommended that new counselor educators work hard to **establish a clear career direction** (e.g., "Find a niche. Become good at something. If you don't love it, get out!").

**Question 7:** What strategies would you recommend to new counselor educators attempting to cope with the demands of multiple life roles (e.g., work, leisure, partners, family)?

Of the 51 responses to Question 7, 13 (25% of the total) indicated that it is important to **maintain nurturing relationships** (e.g., "I think it is good to have some social interaction with some faculty colleagues, but it shouldn't all be so much togetherness that you can't distinguish the two. I have always enjoyed relationships outside the university or outside the department that I've been in"), 12 (23%) recommended that new counselor educators **learn how to prioritize activities** (e.g., "Work hard while at work and set aside quality time for family and friends"), 9 (18%) suggested that it is important to **maintain a high level of self-awareness to effectively manage your career** (e.g., "Make time for personal reflection. Evaluate the direction you are moving toward in your life"), 9 (18%) responses indicated that it is important to **engage in good self-care** (e.g., "Recognize the importance of taking care of yourself—take time to eat well, get enough rest, and engage in a regular exercise program"), and 8 (15%) recommended that counselor educators **engage in personally meaningful avocational activities** (e.g., "Prac-
A hobby or a diversion from your work such as fishing, music, or whatever").

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to identify strategies for successfully performing the primary tasks confronting counselor educators (i.e., research, teaching, and service). Identifying strategies that senior counselor educators have found useful in their work may help other counselor educators manage their careers effectively (Dalton et al., 1977; Robinson, 1994; Sorcinelli, 1994). To clarify the strategies identified by the participants, this discussion focuses on the participants' answers within the most frequent response categories.

**Research**

Developing a specific line of inquiry that reflects one's interests is key to accomplishing research success according to the study participants. This is important information for pretenured counselor educators who may focus more on their total number of research articles rather than on establishing a specific line of inquiry. One respondent expressed concern over those counselor educators who take a "bumble bee" approach to scholarship by moving from one "hot topic" to another rather than focusing on a programmatic line of scholarly inquiry.

Participants also noted the importance of integrating research, service, and teaching activities. Many participants served on committees and special interest groups that were directly connected to their areas of research. One participant noted that by focusing one's activities in this way, a type of "synergistic effect" is created in which one's research activities contribute to one's teaching and service activities and vice versa.

Finally, several participants noted the importance of continuing to develop one's technical skills (e.g., statistical competence and writing skills) to achieve scholarly success. This point is important for many reasons. Perhaps most important, many doctoral students and new counselor educators may feel intimidated by the prospect of engaging in research activities requiring higher level statistical competencies. Participants seem to be suggesting that many of these competencies can be developed and refined "on the job." Many doctoral students and new counselor educators may find it comforting to realize that such mastery is acquired over time rather than within one's doctoral program (O'Brien, 1995).
Teaching

The participants also recommended that counselor educators seek opportunities to enhance their pedagogical skills. Specifically, participants suggested observing, and being observed by, senior faculty members known for their outstanding teaching. Participants also suggested that an additional way to enhance one's pedagogical skills is for counselor educators themselves to be vigilant in engaging in lifelong learning. Keeping current with emerging trends and expanding one's knowledge and competence into new professional areas were two suggestions offered in this regard.

Participants clearly thought that the learning process is enhanced significantly when counselor educators strive to be empathic, to understand their students' worldviews, and to use effective listening skills. Thus, many of the skills counselor educators bring to the counseling process are also very relevant to the classroom and have contributed to the respondents' success as teachers. It is not surprising, therefore, that the participants viewed the learning process as a collaborative one in which students and professors learn from each other. Personal attributes such as taking a positive attitude toward the learning process and making a commitment to improve as a teacher were also seen as vital to successful teaching.

Service

Regarding success in service, the participants emphasized the importance of using effective interpersonal skills for networking and appreciating multiple perspectives in problem resolution. To cope with the interpersonal challenges often occurring in committee work, the participants noted that it is important to function as a team player and to be respectful of the multiple perspectives provided by other committee members. Another strategy for success recommended by the respondents was to align service activities with special interests or areas of expertise. This, it was suggested, helps the individual maintain a positive attitude toward service participation so that service opportunities can be viewed as growth opportunities rather than onerous obligations. Finally, the senior counselor educators in the study emphasized that it is crucial to follow through on one's commitments and to know when to say no to service opportunities to avoid overextending oneself. They lamented the fact that too many people fail to follow through on their commitments.

Balancing Time

The multiple demands inherent in teaching, research, and service require counselor educators to effectively balance their time across
these activities. Obviously, the amount of time allocated to each task may vary according to the type of institution in which one is employed. Priorities in a university emphasizing teaching and service are different from those in universities emphasizing research. When the counselor educators in the study were asked how they balance their time between research, teaching, and service, they again noted the importance of integrating one's activities as much as possible. For example, participants said that they conduct research in the areas in which they teach and that they participate in service organizations that are aligned with their areas of research expertise.

The participants also noted that it is important to learn how to allocate one's time in a disciplined manner. For example, they recommended that new professors schedule time to write and adhere rigorously to the schedule so that the daily demands of teaching and departmental activities do not overshadow the importance and necessity of scholarship. However, many participants recommended that junior faculty members also set limits regarding the amount of time they devote to work-related tasks. They stressed that it is important to make time for outside interests and activities.

**Overcoming Obstacles**

The counselor educators identified several obstacles that they encountered in their research, teaching, and service activities. These hurdles include having manuscripts rejected; finding a job that is aligned with one's strengths and values; and facing discrimination interpersonally, institutionally, and in the profession as a whole. Participants' suggestions for overcoming interpersonal obstacles were to learn from these experiences, to avoid personalizing obstacles, to be persistent in achieving one's goals, and to believe in oneself.

Equally important was the issue of coping with institutional barriers such as professional politics and bureaucracy, limited resources and funding, discrimination, and administrative responsibilities. Some participants thought that having a personal plan or a vision enhanced their ability to overcome institutional obstacles. Regarding the obstacle of institutional racism, one participant said, "I had to change my view of it and how it might affect my existence. I refused to believe there was something wrong with me." One final struggle mentioned was with professional obstacles and the feeling of being overwhelmed by excessive demands. As participants have stated before in the sections on service and research, they stressed that it is crucial to know when to say no and to consistently engage in good self-care activities to avoid becoming overwhelmed by excessive demands from work.
Recommendations to New Counselor Educators

The respondents identified several strategies that new counselor educators might use to manage their careers successfully. However, the response that was overwhelmingly endorsed by the participants was to maintain one's professional growth. The emphasis on synergism was also noted as a useful strategy for maximizing success in research, teaching, and service activities. In addition, the participants urged new professionals to keep their clinical skills current. The basic overtone to this response was the importance of engaging in lifelong learning and of seeking opportunities to apply what one learns. Another frequently stated strategy for managing one's career was to maintain and nurture professional relationships. Even though new counselor educators may feel isolated in their jobs, it is important to remember that collaboration is essential to successful teaching, service, and scholarship activities. Establishing supportive professional relationships was viewed as being essential for nourishing and sustaining one's career. This search for social support includes finding mentors within and outside one's institution (O'Brien, 1995). Finally, participants thought that successful career management entails finding a niche or passion in counselor education and then actively seeking employment opportunities that are congruent with these characteristics.

Coping With Demands of Multiple Life Roles

The participants were also asked to offer new counselor educators suggestions for coping with the demands of multiple life roles. Prioritizing life roles was their most frequent response. They also noted the importance of fostering personal relationships with family and friends and to intentionally make time for these activities. The senior counselor educators in the study also agreed that the stress associated with balancing many life roles can be excessive, and they frequently mentioned the importance of engaging in some form of self-care such as exercise and having enjoyable avocational pursuits. One respondent stated that he worked hard to include his family in his professional activities. For example, he stated that his partner consistently provided editorial feedback on his manuscripts, that he consistently discussed his work activities with his family, and that, whenever possible, his family traveled with him to conferences. Some participants confessed that balancing time equally among life roles was simply not possible and, in retrospect, they often sacrificed time with family to contribute professionally. Thus, some responses to Question 7 included the reminders to avoid workaholic behavior as much as possible.
Limitations

Despite the useful information provided by the participants, it is important to note that there were limitations to this study. The counselor educators participating in this study were very active in research and external service activities. Using other criteria would obviously result in a different sample and, perhaps, different results. In addition, study participants were selected based on their individual accomplishments rather than their institution's Carnegie ranking. Thus, researchers may find it useful to study senior counselor educators employed at institutions focusing on teaching and service as primary criteria for successful performance. Identifying strategies for success in settings not so heavily weighted in favor of research will provide more comprehensive strategies for accomplishing the tasks confronting counselor educators and would facilitate comparisons among institutions representing various Carnegie rankings. Undoubtedly, the bias toward research as a leading criterion for successful performance as a counselor educator also influenced the content analysis conducted by the researchers. As noted previously, researcher bias must always be considered as a limitation in qualitative research studies. Other researchers may have identified different categories using the same responses.

The research is also limited in the demographic categories of the participants. Although a more representative cross section of participants was invited to participate, professional obligations prohibited their participation thereby making the sample less racially and ethnically diverse than was intended initially. A final limitation is that some respondents replied over the phone and others replied via electronic mail. The latter responses tended to be shorter than those provided over the phone but were not qualitatively different.

Future Research Implications

Limitations aside, the results of the study provide important insights into the strategies leading counselor educators use to cope with multiple demands they confront in their work. The importance of integrating teaching, research, and service activities and working collaboratively are themes emerging from the participants. Participants recommended that counselor educators collaborate with more senior counselor educators whenever possible. Thus, the participants provide implicit support for the importance of developing mentoring relationships.

However, counselor educators at universities emphasizing teaching and service should be cautioned that the participants in this study
emphasized research activities in their work. Future research with larger and more representative samples could provide more comprehensive strategies for successfully performing the primary tasks confronting counselor educators (i.e., teaching, research, and service). Quantitative investigations examining the effectiveness of the strategies identified in this study would provide important information for counselor educators. Investigating strategies used by senior counselor educators who have not had access to mentoring-type assistance would also be useful.

In the meantime, information from this study may serve as a useful stimulus for discussions among counselor educators and counselor education students preparing for the professorate. Sharing experiences and strategies for coping with the tasks confronting counselor educators could, in itself, provide an important source of information and support for those involved in the profession of training counselors and provide answers to questions students have about developing a career in academia (Morgeson et al., 1999).

References


