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A comparative study of counseling theories & techniques used by practicum students and former graduates

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF COUNSELING
THEORIES & TECHNIQUES
USED BY PRACTICUM STUDENTS AND FORMER GRADUATES

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Counseling

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Pamela Jo Thompson

July, 1995

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express gratitude to Dr. Joe Davis for all his support, guidance, and words of encouragement which gave me the courage to follow my dreams. His professional expertise and commitment to education will always remain a part of my professional and personal life. I also want to express my appreciation to the other members of my committee, Dr. Robert Butler and Dr. Judy Harrington, whose recommendations and guidance were instrumental in completing this project.

I would like to thank the practicum students and former graduate students from the University of Nebraska at Omaha counseling program, who generously and graciously afforded me their full cooperation in data collection. A special note of thanks is also extended to Debra and Sandra Callison who helped in the data collection process.

A final thank you goes to my mother, Myrna Callison, for her lifelong encouragement and support that has brought me to this point.

Pamela J. Thompson

Dedicated to
Aaron John, my loving and
supporting husband

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the theories and techniques used by the practicum students and former graduates of the master's level agency counseling program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), which is certified and approved by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Also studied were the theories and techniques learned at UNO and elsewhere.

Two-hundred and forty questionnaires were mailed to former graduates of which thirty-seven percent were returned. Twenty-four practicum students were administered the questionnaire in person.

Descriptive analysis of the data demonstrated diversity between the theories and techniques used by practicum students, recent graduates (< 5 years out of the program), former graduates (5-9 years out of the program), and former graduates (greater than 9 years out of the program). It can be seen from analysis of the results that counselors become more diversified in their use of theories and techniques as time out of the program increases. The final chapter briefly describes a need for counseling students to know themselves and become more aware of their own beliefs, values, and views and concludes with recommendations for further study.

Chapter I

ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

INTRODUCTION

The field of counseling has been growing rapidly over the last forty years. Within this growth an abundance of theories have been examined and used: some of them have been borrowed from other fields, such as psychology, and some of them have been newly developed (Kelly, 1991; Kuhn, 1970). The counseling profession might be better characterized by this rapid “theory attack” than by hard evidence or research of the value of counseling. The scope of theories used in the field of counseling range from Psychoanalysis to Brief Therapy and includes such theories as Client-centered, Behaviorism, Rational Emotive Therapy, Adlerian, Multi-modal, as well as others (Corey, 1986).

The above paragraph has listed some of the many theories used in the field of counseling. This picture is one of diversity as the various counseling theories appear to differ considerably, not only in method and technique, but also in their basic concepts, therapeutic goals, and their philosophical orientations. These differences in relation to the counseling process have been a source of uncertainty to the field of counseling for some time. Counselor educators seem unsure as to whether such differences should be seen as cause for concern or whether they are signs of a healthy growth within the counseling profession (Hulnik, 1977). Others,

like Kelly (1991), see theoretical diversity as being a positive direction for counseling: as different views of counseling are clarified and integrated, Kelly believes the counseling profession will gain a more thorough, comprehensive view of the total counseling experience. Although such questions have been raised, the field of counseling has too often seemed hesitant to make systematic and empirical investigations into the process and outcome of counselor education (Carkhuff, 1966; Garfield, 1980).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the most complex problems facing counseling education programs is that of teaching theory and technique. The problem of what to teach counseling students involves the following issues:

- Whether students be taught specified theories and techniques from which they can determine appropriate behaviors or taught and encouraged to develop their own style or orientation in agreement with their own personality and experiences.
- Whether counselor educators should show a preference for one theoretical orientation over others.
- Are students capable of assuming responsibility for their education or is “advice-giving” to be permissible if it feels right to the counselor educator?

- Does the counselor educator teach by a set formula, as well as example that some ways of counseling are better than others?
- And how by being controlled can students be taught not to control others?

Although curriculum requirements for the training of counselors vary from one institution to another, in nearly all cases one or more courses in theories and techniques of counseling are required as part of the basic program (Corey, 1986). Depending upon the background and training of the person or persons in charge of the basic courses and, especially the practicum experience, many counseling educators follow the idea that one particular theoretical orientation is the correct and, often, only approach of counseling (Wrenn, 1966). Unfortunately, many students during the early phase of their training are not in a position to evaluate this method of teaching and believe the only way to succeed is to accept and follow that particular theory, and as a result of this belief, many students try to adapt their personalities to fit in with the theoretical orientation their educators embrace (Evraiff, 1963 & Garfield, 1980).

The students' desire for structure may also be a possible source of this behavior. Students often seek answers to questions by turning to theory in hopes of finding a place for everything and to put everything in its place (Greenburg, 1982).

Many students who are trained under one theoretical approach or another by an educator who is committed to that particular approach may not see this as a problem, but this false comfort is usually short lived. As new counselors, students may encounter situations which they cannot handle under the particular theoretical approach they were trained in (Corey, 1986; Kelly, 1991). While this may not come as a surprise to the experienced therapist, it could be threatening to the beginner. Unfortunately, the original theoretical effectiveness of the educator is seldom transmitted to the students (Ford & Urban, 1963).

On the other side, another problem exists, especially in large institutions, where there may be no single counseling theory held by all the counseling educators. In such cases the student may experience some anxiety as he/she comes to understand that there is no one path supported by all counseling educators. Such uncertainty in training may result in near-panic, or it may result in greater maturity as the student comprehends that many of the answers are simply not known.

In either situation, (i.e. either being restricted to one particular theory or being exposed to many) it would be unrealistic to assume that the student comes to the counselor educator with no theory of counseling at all. Each student brings to any program his/her own theory of what counseling is all about; no student enters a counseling education program without a trace of a theory (Hague, 1989). The

student certainly must have some view of the major components of counseling theory: the nature of man, goals of counseling, and the way in which people change. He/she will have read counseling books, will know that there are different points of view about counseling, and may even have enrolled in one of the “schools” of theory and begun following its founder (Lister, 1964). In 1977, Hulnik described a danger in the premature acceptance of a theoretical orientation, and stated it may lead to negative consequences for the student who wishes to label, dissect, and understand counseling before experiencing it. The experience is new, unprocessed, terrifyingly real, and is unpredictable. While the theory is neat, clean, and contains no surprises, Hulnik believes this leads students to jump into theory much earlier than counseling itself.

Luciano, Granahl, and Hansen (1986) explain that a theory is more than speculation, opinion, statement of position, or a point of view; and is more than just a collection of principles, methods, or techniques. They describe theory as an organized set of ideas which can explain the largest amount of material of concern. A theory organizes, interprets, and states in the form of laws or principles the facts and knowledge in a particular area and provides a systematic approach to dealing with problems (Corey, 1986).

The purpose of theories is to provide a guide to counselor’s behavior or a framework that assists in organizing understandings about client behavior in a

meaningful way. Theories suggest certain counseling techniques and identify goals and objectives to be pursued for client benefits and for evaluation (Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987).

The test for theories is -- do they work? Good theories work more often and in a greater variety of situations than poor theories. There doesn't seem to be a significant difference between theory and practice; if a theory is sufficient and works, then it is practical (Luciano, Granahl, & Hansen, 1986).

Corey (1986) describes the relationship between techniques and theories, by explaining that techniques are tools used that reflect the counselor's philosophy and attitude. Also, the techniques the counselor chooses to use will vary, depending on the theoretical orientation he/she follows. For example, a counselor whose theory focuses on the cognitive parts of human behavior will use logical, rational, and directive techniques, while a counselor whose theoretical orientation emphasizes the affective parts of human behavior will focus on feeling-oriented techniques. Generally speaking, the techniques associated with a given theory are used to implement the main ideas of that theory. Unfortunately, many theories and techniques courses seem to confuse the issues, and many counseling students arrive at the practicum level of their training program with some strongly held, and often incorrect, views about the counseling process (Greenburg, 1982).

In teaching theory and technique courses, and especially in supervising students in practicum, counselor educators often tell students to “be themselves” in the counseling process. Students are told not to try playing a “role” which may reflect nothing more than how they think they should be responding, on the basis of whatever previous training they may have had (Evraiff, 1963). In his 1989 article, Hague states that it is advantageous for students to adapt counseling theories and techniques to their own personality and to establish their own communication style rather than attempting to change their personalities to fit the theories and techniques. Hague believes counseling students who restrict their own flexibility and spontaneity by trying to use techniques which do not fit them as individuals will have rather ineffective and shallow counseling relationships.

Unfortunately, many students taking theories and techniques courses in counseling have the idea that only one theoretical orientation is correct and, as a result, lose most of their flexibility in trying to use a style that either does not fit their own personalities or else is not appropriate for the problem they are attempting to work on with their client (Garfield & Kurtz, 1977). Counselor educators need to teach students to really listen to the nature of the problem being presented and to adapt their techniques accordingly. The problem is -- how is this taught? Or better yet -- can it be taught?

Students need to realize that a unified theory of counseling may not be formed right away and that they will need to make use of the knowledge and information that comes from a variety of theories (Corey, 1977; Lister, 1964). This suggests that effective counselors may be those who are exposed to a variety of theoretical orientations to provide both an extensive experience and an understanding of the problems which occur in counseling.

To deal with this dilemma, many counselor educators separate the instructional and counseling roles and teach the student by correction and specification how to perform counseling behaviors without “correcting” him/her. This, “Do as I say, not as I do” method comes easier to those who accept the possibility or necessity of multiple professional roles. In 1964, Lister noted that counselor educators who behave as counselors, in addition to their supervisory roles, are better able to help students in developing personal theories.

Another solution, particularly used in larger schools, is to provide the student with counselor-educators following different theoretical orientations and let him/her accept whatever approach is the most comfortable (Kelly, 1991). This solution creates additional problems. Who ultimately grades or evaluates the student? Providing equal access to the models is difficult. Such programs require mutual respect among the staff members and near equal status.

In short, no completely satisfactory solution seems evident, but in practice the solution most preferred by educators is based on the warning to the student: “By all means do what is comfortable for you, but if you are wise you will learn to be comfortable doing what I want you to do -- imitating me!” (Garfield, 1980).

There is not enough time in a graduate program to provide for systematic exposure to a single theory in depth, but at the same time it doesn't seem as if there is ample time for an extensive knowledge of many theories (Parker, 1967). This situation has posed many problems for various counselor training programs. Therefore the question remains: How then do we teach counseling students to incorporate self exploration as a means to develop a theoretical orientation and group of techniques?

SIGNIFICANCE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To date, there have been fewer than a dozen studies done on the analysis of theories and techniques taught in counselor education programs (Gibb, 1968; Hague, 1989; Kelly, 1991; Lichentenberg, 1985; Parker, 1967).

The purpose of this investigation was to examine the most prevalent theories and techniques taught in a counselor education program and to compare them to theories and techniques used by practicum students and former graduates.

This study analyzed one counselor education program and addressed the following issues:

- What theories and techniques practicum students and former graduates reported to be using as practicing counselors.
- What theories and techniques practicum students and former graduates reported they learned from their counseling education program.
- Whether practicum students and former graduates are using theories and techniques other than those learned in their counseling education program, and where they were learned.

These are not just academic questions, they are also important to individuals who may be in need of counseling and to the future of the profession as a whole.

This study took the position that students need a firm understanding and familiarization of all the major approaches before being able to successfully ground themselves in one theoretical approach. With passing experience they can integrate and assimilate techniques from other approaches that fit well within their theory and personal style.

It was expected there would be a difference between what theories and techniques practicum students and graduates less than five years, between five and nine years, and nine or more years out of the program report to be using as practicing counselors. It was hypothesized that as time passes individuals in the

of counseling become more diversified and begin developing techniques and styles of their own.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

A distinction needs to be made between counseling theories and counseling techniques.

Theories are broad assumptions; or one's "philosophy" of life, humanity, and view of how change occurs.

Techniques refer to strategies or tools used for the purpose of meeting counseling goals.

Personal Theory, as defined by Lister (1964), is the set of hypotheses a counselor views as reliable guides to personally effective and satisfying human relations.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Most research found in the area of theories and techniques taught in counseling education was conducted in the 1960's (Gladstein, G.A. & et al., 1987). This is partially due to the fact that counselor education programs were developed in the 1940's and 1950's, and it wasn't until the 1960's that the counseling profession began analyzing the effects of various program styles (Kuhn, 1970).

The literature in this study is related to the following three areas:

1. Effects the theoretical orientations of counselor educators have on their students.
2. The teaching of theories and techniques; a variety vs. a select few.
3. Encouragement to students to "know themselves" and develop their own styles based on their experiences, personalities, values, etc.

1. **Effects the theoretical orientations of counselor educators have on their students**

There is a danger that counseling students will pick and choose only from those techniques and theories they are exposed to in their professional counseling

education program. The authors in this section have studied this danger as well as the beneficial effects an educator's theoretical orientation has on students.

A 1962 study by Demos and Zuwaylif showed there were no significant differences between the effects educator's theoretical orientations have on students, other than those students supervised by client-centered educators. These students became more reflective and less interpretive as a result of their training. They also were found to do less probing and attempted more responses aimed at eliciting understanding.

Evraiff (1963) found evidence of the danger when the counselor educator passes along only his/her own view of counseling to students. He warns that students need to be aware there is a lack of agreement in this field and behavior rewarded by one educator might be unaccepted by another. He suggests a reasonable way to deal with these differences might be pointing out to students that there are various theoretical approaches, and they need not limit themselves to the approaches their educators follow.

Evraiff believes just as a client has a choice of therapists, so should a student have a choice of educators. This suggests that it may also be beneficial for the student to know the theoretical approach that each instructor follows before entering a program.

An opposing view is presented by Carkhuff (1966) who discusses the training dilemma and identifies three elements important to counselor education: 1) shaping behavior, 2) a nurturant relationship between educators and students which allows self-understanding, and 3) counselor educators act as role models for effective counseling. He believes that the mixture of these three are offered to students and must come from the counselor educator's theoretical orientation and not from research evidence.

Stoltenberg and Delworth (1987) studied various models of counseling education programs and the supervision process, and presented their own developmental approach to counselor education. In their model they describe three levels they believe all counseling trainees experience. Beginning trainees, identified as Level I, are thought to stick to the same theoretical orientation of their supervisor, as they progress through Level II they become more open to exploring other theoretical approaches, and by the time they reach Level III they have been exposed to many theories and techniques. Level III trainees are able to integrate various theories and techniques, develop their own personal style and are not threatened or inhibited by the knowledge that their supervisor may follow a different theoretical orientation.

In his book, Counseling Theories and Counselor Education Seminar, Parker (1967) compiled and edited various approaches to counselor education to be

the University of Minnesota Counselor Education Seminar in the examination of developing a theory of counselor education. Three of the writers were Levy, Vance, and Blocher, whose approaches are described here:

- 1) Levy (1963) describes the first approach as cognitive conceptual. He believes the counseling student needs a model of man which will help him make sense of human behavior. He points out that a great deal of learning occurs through identification and modeling, and thus believes the graduates of a counseling education program will be no more imaginative, flexible, and open to new experience than their instructors.
- 2) The second approach was written by Vance (1964). He suggests counselors acquire their theoretical orientations in bits and pieces. He states that although students may be exposed to a variety of theories, the first practicum supervisor is in a powerful position of influence and provides the first working model to the beginning counselor. Vance believes the practicum experience should expose students to a variety of treatment approaches to any one problem.
- 3) The third approach by Blocher (1966) is a careful interaction of all approaches (i.e. eclecticism). Blocher states there has been an emphasis on training counselors rather than educating them. He believes counselors have been vigorously given a set of techniques and instructed to apply them in rigid ways, or taught to think solely within the confines of narrowly conceived theoretical

approaches. Blocher concludes by suggesting education programs design learning in a way for each individual student to find a natural and comfortable counseling style.

2. **Exposing students to theories and techniques; a variety vs. a select few.**

The literature in this section deliberates the decision whether to provide students with a variety of counseling theories and techniques, or offer only a pre-selected few. The following studies provide justifications for or against the position presented.

Gibb (1968) wrote, "I believe that each counselor must, in a sense, create his own theory. He must behave in a way that fits him." Gibb believes counselors should be role-free, that is, be themselves and not try to play the role of counselor. He believes it is important that counseling students be given great freedom of choice in developing counseling styles; theoretical frameworks; and experiencing a variety of styles, theories and settings. He believes students should be encouraged to experiment within a wide spectrum, and should be optimally free to develop a theory and a model which feels comfortable to him. Gibb also emphasized that prospective counselors should have freedom in selecting a theoretical orientation, and in developing a counseling style.

Another approach is presented by Lazarus (1989); he describes the Multimodal Approach as “systematic eclecticism” claiming that counselors may use techniques from a variety of theories without subscribing to the theoretical rationale supporting each. He distinguishes a difference between technical and theoretical eclecticism by stating that counselors and therapists need to be flexible, versatile and technically eclectic, if they hope to be effective with a wide range of problems and with different personality types. He suggests using a variety of techniques according to what works best for the client.

Greenburg (1982) addresses the problems counseling students and educators are faced with in learning and teaching counseling theory and techniques. She presents the idea that the Multimodal Approach can provide students a way of using all effective methods in an organized way and emphasizes this approach as an alternative to both the restrictiveness of following one approach and the confusion of using many approaches.

Lichtenberg (1985) also addresses the confusion of being faced with many different approaches. He cites a 1975 report by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in which a recognition was made of over 130 different approaches to counseling and psychotherapy. Lichtenberg doesn't think the traditional idea of having students develop their own personal theory is practical with such an abundance of theoretical approaches to choose from.

Hague (1989) believes that every counseling student brings to any program his or her own theory of what counseling is about. Thus, he believes the first task of a counselor education program is to help the student bring this information into awareness. Hague believes students should be provided with a variety of theoretical approaches and the job as educators should be to help students make a choice about what fits best with the theoretical position he or she already holds. The educators should equip the student with what is needed to make critical examinations in order to make a fit between self and theories.

Kelly (1991) believes that adhering to one or two theories does not adequately prepare students to work with clients. He believes no single theory provides all the answers and students must learn to integrate what is learned and eventually develop a single unified theory to counseling. Kelly states that to do this educators and students need to look to the new theories and ideas instead of clinging to the inadequate historical theories of the past. He accepts that students do need to know historical theories but only as important referents and not as guides to use in counseling.

The above studies make it clear that counselor training must be broad enough to provide firm foundations in philosophy and theory, and specific enough to guarantee a high degree of expertise in the theories and techniques of counseling. To develop training programs which make this possible is difficult.

Corey (1977) offers a solution to this problem by suggesting eclecticism be used as “a framework for the professional education of counselors”. He recommends counselors choose a theory first on the basis of their belief system and as they become more experienced in the field they will make modifications to their theoretical framework.

Gilliland, James, & Bowman (1989) also offer eclecticism as a model to counseling. In their book, Theories and Strategies in Counseling & Psychotherapy, they take a stance that a single true path to effective counseling has not yet emerged. They present an eclectic model of counseling following the belief that no one theory can have all the answers for all situations clients find themselves in. Their view of eclecticism is that, sometimes in the process of working with a client an appropriate system of counseling can be selected to match the particular problem or person. They believe a competent counselor knows when to select another theory and which techniques to use in cases where the client becomes stuck in an impasse. They point out that one problem with eclecticism is the unrealistic expectation for an individual to acquire sufficient expertise in all therapeutic orientations. They warn that eclecticism may simply be the ideal but not always practical due to such human limitations.

In a study on eclectic views, Garfield & Kurtz (1974) sampled 154 clinical psychologists to determine the theoretical orientation of each. It was found that

the majority of the sample labeled themselves as eclectics. In 1977, Garfield & Kurtz decided to conduct further inquiry due to a lack of agreement on the precise meaning of the term eclecticism. The respondents were asked to define or explain their own eclectic views. The results clearly indicated that there is no explicit theoretical definition of eclectic, other than suggesting an eclectic does not commit to one specific approach or that he/she utilizes aspects of more than one theoretical approach.

From reading the research on eclecticism it can be seen that such an approach is difficult to define and, therefore, nearly impossible to teach. Perhaps it is not realistic to become eclectic in theory, but that it would be best for a counselor to have one or two theoretical bases, and to have a variety of techniques, from different views, available to use.

3. **Encouraging students to “know themselves” and develop their own styles based on their experiences, personalities, values, etc.**

There seems to be a large amount of research evidence available to support the idea that it is better for the counselor to fit theory and techniques to his/her own natural response rather than trying to fit his/her natural response style to theory or technique (Corey, 1986; Hague, 1989).

A study by Gottesman (1962) and another by Wrenn (1960) both suggest that what kind of person the counselor is determines his/her counseling performance as much as his/her training or theoretical orientation. Wrenn believes the most effective means of dealing with another person's problems is the knowledge of our own problems and our ability to solve such problems.

Hulnik (1977) also writes that true human growth is not merely the gradual addition of techniques and theories but is the gradual uncovering and understanding of oneself. He adds that a counselor education program must be capable of creating the environment within which students can learn to "know themselves".

This idea is not a new one, in 1948 Seeman found that it wasn't the counselor's choice of technique, but that it was the counselor's character that led to success in counseling. Seeman suggested that counseling students will eventually tend to develop their own theoretical and technical style, regardless of the orientation from which they were trained. This would strongly suggest that a counselor's theoretical style is closely related to personality factors.

Seeman believed it would be advisable for counselor educators to put less emphasis on the development of techniques, as identified with a particular theory, and to encourage students to develop counseling style in line with their own past experience and natural style of relating. Counselor educators may do well to build

upon students past skills rather than try to force them into the use of a specific theory, at the loss of flexibility and spontaneity.

Callis, Polmantier, and Roeber (1954) found similar results in considering the matter of counselor “expertness”. They concluded that the degree of counselor experience, presumably based on training and experience, is a more important factor than is the theoretical orientation of the counselor.

The goal in educating counselors, as stated by Rogers (1957), is described in the following quote:

The student should develop his own orientation to psychotherapy out of his own experience. In my estimation every effective therapist has built his own orientation to therapy within himself and out of his own experience with his clients or patients. It is quite true that this orientation, as finally developed, may be such that it closely resembles that of others, or closely resembles the orientation to which he was exposed. Nevertheless, the responses made by the effective therapist in his interviews are not made in a certain way because that is the psychoanalytic way, or the client-centered way, or the Adlerian way, they are made because the therapist has found that type of response effective in his own experience. Likewise, he does not put on certain attitudes because those are the attitudes expected of an analyst or client-centered therapist or an Adlerian. He discovers and uses certain attitudes in himself which have developed because they have been rewarded by the effective outcome of earlier experiences in carrying on therapy. Thus, the aim of a training program in therapy should be to turn out individuals who have an independent and open attitude toward their own experience in working with clients. If this is achieved, then they can continually formulate and reformulate and revise their own approach to the individuals with whom they are working in such a way that their approach results in more constructive and effective help (p. 87).

A similar position is expressed by Arbuckle (1960) in “Counseling: Philosophy or Science?” The general implication of his paper is conveyed in the final paragraph:

The actual counseling, of course, is simply a reflection of the counselor himself, and the general level of counselor competence is, I fear, due not so much to the lack of training, as it is to the lack of education. In fact, it might well be that a real education has an inhibiting effect on one’s training. We train technicians who ask the empirical question “how”, but only the educated man can ask the more philosophic question “why”.

Feder (1961) describes this ability to ask why in addition to how as a “counseling art form”. He states a focus on training and techniques leads to a conception of the counselor as a technician, and suggests we view the counseling student as an artist, encouraging creativeness and assist in structuring his/her own self-perception and environment. He believes educators should give students proper grounding in theory and then encourage them to develop techniques and skills expressive of his/her unique personality.

Combs and Soper (1963) concluded from a series of studies that the major technique of counseling was the “self-as-instrument”; the counselor’s self became the major facilitator of positive growth for clients. They also found that effective counselors have the following belief in common: they perceive other people as able rather than unable to solve their own problems and manage their own lives. Effective counselors perceive people as dependable, friendly, and worthy.

Williamson (1962) has also described the counselor as a technique, indicating that the counselor's view of human development should show through his/her behavior and efforts at relating effectively with the client, and must come from an acceptance of him/herself. The counselor is a technique not only in what is done or said, but in how one communicates nonverbally.

In a book called the Transparent Self, Jourard (1971) describes a belief that it is not necessary to have an array of techniques, but it is necessary to be oneself in the therapeutic process. Jourard also describes a need for educators to know themselves and share this with their students.

Lister (1964) talks about the counselor's personal theory, and maintains that the beginning counselor has already spent a number of years formulating, testing and modifying his/her views. This personal theory is based on a guide to personally effective and satisfying human relations, which constitute patterns for counseling behavior even before counseling students are introduced to formal courses in theory and techniques. Therefore, Lister concludes that the formal theory chosen by a counselor is probably related to his/her own personal theory.

The literature in this study shows opinions have not changed much over the last forty years as to how theories and techniques should be taught in counselor education programs. The review of literature has shown we cannot simply teach students theory and techniques, but that we need to also, in some way, teach

counselors to “know themselves” and develop techniques that fit their personalities. This literature merely states this as an idea or possibility, but the field of counseling is lacking in empirical evidence showing the effects of what is taught in counseling education programs, and later used in the counseling field.

This study is an attempt to do this, i.e. show, using empirical evidence that after many years out of graduate school, counselors become more diversified and are able to integrate various theories and techniques. The hypothesis is directed at finding results as to what practicum students and former graduates report they learned in their counseling education program, as well as what additional theories and techniques are used, and where they were learned.

Chapter III

METHODS

SUBJECT DEFINITION

The participants surveyed in this study consisted of twenty-four practicum students and two-hundred and forty former graduates of the Master's level graduate counseling program, located in the College of Education at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Nebraska, which is certified and approved by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

The practicum experience at the University of Nebraska at Omaha consists of the following three levels, as described in the university's 1995-1996 graduate catalog:

1. Counseling Practicum -- This course is the first of the clinical applications of counseling knowledge, techniques and specialty areas in a counseling setting. Students practice, develop and improve counseling skills in an environment of professional constructive criticism.
2. Advanced Counseling Practicum is a continuation of Counseling Practicum.

3. Internship is a field experience in an approved guidance program under the supervision of a qualified counselor and a guidance professor of the university.

Of the twenty-four practicum students, eleven were enrolled in Counseling Practicum, six were enrolled in Advanced Practicum, and seven were enrolled in Internship. The practicum students were working toward a M.S. or M.A. in an agency counseling program and all had completed courses in theories and techniques.

The two-hundred and forty former graduates were categorized into three groups of eighty participants each. The groups were as follows; recent graduates - those having graduated less than five years ago, former graduates -- those having graduated between five and nine years ago, and former graduates having graduated more than nine years ago. All former graduates who participated in this study graduated from the same university with a M.S. or M.A. in Agency Counseling.

PROCEDURE

A list of the current practicum students was generated from a database kept in the counseling program office. A list of nine-hundred and twenty-eight persons who graduated prior to 1986, in agency counseling, was generated from a database

kept by the Alumni Association. A final list of two-hundred and thirty-four former agency counseling graduates, graduating from May 1986 to May 1995, was generated from a database kept in the university registrar's office. All available addresses were provided by both the registrar's office and the Alumni Association, while some addresses were not available. A list of phone numbers was obtained from the Alumni Association for graduates prior to 1986, while phone numbers were not available from the registrar's office.

A total of 1,162 persons have graduated from the agency counseling program at the university in this study. From the lists described here, practicum students and former graduates were then divided into the following four categories:

1. practicum students
2. recent graduates -- those having graduated less than five years ago
3. former graduates -- those having graduated between five and nine years ago
4. former graduates -- those having graduated more than nine years ago.

Of the 1,162 graduates only the former graduates having Omaha addresses were used as the stratified population to randomly select the sample. Of the addresses given sixty-one percent were located in Omaha. Eighty graduates were then randomly selected from each of three separate categories forming a total of **240 former graduates.**

The 240 selected former graduates were sent a cover letter and a questionnaire. The cover letter explained the purpose of the questionnaire and requested a return within three weeks. In addition, an addressed, postage paid envelope was included for easy return of the completed questionnaire. Follow-up phone calls were made to the former graduates in Category #4 (more than 9 years out of the program) one week after the questionnaires were sent. Phone numbers were not available for Categories 2 & 3. The phone calls were to verify that the questionnaires were received and to request that they be returned. Of the 80 former graduates in Category #4, twenty-one were contacted by phone. Eleven graduates had already returned the questionnaires and were thanked for doing so, the remaining ten agreed to return the questionnaires as soon as possible.

The twenty-four practicum students (forming Category #1) were given the cover letter and questionnaire in person during scheduled practicum class time.

INSTRUMENTATION

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire designed to gather information about theories and techniques learned in a counseling education program and those used in the counseling field. Suggestions provided by Dillman (1978) on the construction and implementation of mailed questionnaires were followed.

The cover letters and questionnaires administered to the practicum students (Appendix B) were slightly different from those given to the former graduates (Appendix A) -- both will be described here.

Cover Letter

All cover letters were put on department letterhead and personally signed to increase the response. The title of the thesis and a brief description of the purpose were also included. Six demographical questions were included to gain the following information; age, gender, years of experience, ethnicity, type of service provided, and the settings of service. In addition, the cover letter sent to the former graduates asked whether they were currently providing services, and also had a requested response date.

Questionnaire

The first page of the questionnaire consisted of twelve questions designed to collect the following information; what theories participants are using in their work with clients, what theories participants learned from UNO's counseling program, what theories were learned elsewhere and where they were learned. A

final question asked the participants to identify the theoretical approach most closely followed by their practicum instructors.

The second page consisted of twenty-nine questions aimed at collecting the following information; what techniques participants are using in their work with clients, what techniques participants learned from UNO's counseling program, what techniques were learned elsewhere and where they were learned. The participants responded by placing an x in the appropriate yes or no column and by writing in short responses where appropriate.

STATISTICAL TREATMENT

All data collected was reported in terms of frequency of responses using Microsoft Works Spreadsheet for data analysis. Results were tabulated into means and analyzed using descriptive analysis.

Chapter IV
ANALYSIS OF DATA
Results and Discussion

Of the two-hundred and forty questionnaires that were sent to former graduates, ninety were returned, thus providing a return rate of 37.5%. However, twelve participants (two from Category 3 and ten from Category 4) marked no to Question #7, asking whether they were currently providing counseling or therapy as a profession and, therefore, as requested, returned the questionnaires without completing them. Eleven questionnaires were returned after the deadline and were therefore not included in the data analysis. All 24 practicum students responded.

Ninety-one individuals completed the questionnaire, thus providing the following breakdown of participants in each category:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. practicum students | = 24 |
| 2. recent graduates (less than 5 years out) | = 27 |
| 3. former graduates (5-9 years out) | = 18 |
| 4. former graduates (greater than 9 years out) | = <u>22</u> |

total N = 91

ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHICS

Questions One through Six of the cover letter revealed the following information:

Age & Years of Experience

As can be seen in Table 1, the average age of participants increases with years out of the program. What is of interest is the average number in years of experience is greater for the practicum students (2.481) than the average number in years of experience for the recent graduates having graduated within the last five years (2.019). A possible explanation might be that the counseling program at this university is accepting persons with greater amounts of prior experience. Another explanation might be that participants misinterpreted what was meant by years of experience and responded by reporting any counseling related experience rather than experience as a counseling professional.

MEANS

Table 1

		Age	Years of Experience
	practicum students	34.375	2.481
CATEGORY	< 5 years out	36.111	2.019
	5-9 years out	46.294	7.389
	> 9 years out	49.864	18.795

Gender

Table 2 displays the frequencies and percents for each gender in each category. There were a total of 24 males and 67 females who participated in filling out the questionnaire for the study. The majority of total participants in the study were female (74% vs. 26% male). There was a large difference in the number of males to females in Categories 3 (5-9 years) and 4 (> 9 years) with Category 4 being almost equally dispersed having 45% male and 55% female, and then a change in Category 3 having 6% male and 94% female.

Table 2 Frequency and Percent of Males & Females

CATEGORY	Males		Females	
	<u>freq.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>freq.</u>	<u>%</u>
practicum students	6	25	18	75
< 5 years out	7	26	20	74
5-9 years out	1	6	17	94
> 9 years out	10	45	12	55

Ethnicity

Of the 91 participants 94.5% were white non-Hispanic, while one participant in Category 1 reported to be Asian and three participants from

Category 1 reported to be African-American. It is of interest that the only participants from minority were found to be in the group of practicum students, perhaps suggesting that the field of counseling, although consisting largely of white non-Hispanic individuals, may be gaining in cultural diversity.

Nature of Services Provided

The types of services provided were similar throughout the four categories. The two services having the highest frequencies in each category were family and marriage. Participants wrote in several additional responses under #12; "Please list any others." Individual was added in each of the four categories. EAP (employee assistance program) and child & domestic were added in Categories 1, 2, & 3. Other write-ins included: career/vocational, group, grief & loss, crisis, and hypnotherapy. It is expected that the frequencies for these additional responses would have been higher throughout each category if previously listed with the other choices on the questionnaire (described further under limitations).

Settings in Which Services Are Provided

The settings in which services are provided were similar throughout the four categories. The setting having the highest frequency from each category was community agency. The setting having the lowest frequency from each category

was residential group home. Participants wrote in several additional responses under “others”. Private practice was added under Categories 2, 3, & 4, while church was added under Categories 1, 2, & 3. Other write-ins included: adult day care, vocational rehabilitation facility, nursing home, and university. It is expected that the frequency for additional responses would have been higher throughout each category if previously listed with the other choices on the questionnaire (described further under limitations).

These results can help explain that any differences shown in the use of theories and techniques between the four categories is not due to differences between the nature and setting of services provided by participants in this study.

INFORMATION THIS STUDY PROVIDED

1. What theories participants reported to be using.
2. What techniques participants reported to be using.
3. What theories participants reported they learned in the Counseling Education Program.
4. What techniques participants reported they learned in the Counseling Education Program.
5. What theories participants reported they learned elsewhere, and where they were learned.
6. What techniques participants reported they learned elsewhere, and where they were learned.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS ANSWERED THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. Do the results show differences between the following 4 groups?
 - 1) practicum students
 - 2) recent graduates (less than 5 years)
 - 3) former graduates (5-9 years out)
 - 4) former graduates (greater than 9 years out)
2. Does evidence suggest counselors become more diversified in their use of counseling theories and techniques as time passes?

Means and frequencies were tabulated for each of the 4 groups, concerning the questions listed here.

Before reviewing the following results it should be noted that the frequencies and percents given in the tables do not total 100 for each column due to the design of the questionnaire. The participants were given the opportunity to select more than one response thus the responses are not independent of one another (see limitations for more detail).

It should also be noted that the frequencies are slightly higher for the practicum students and recent graduates (<5 years out) due to the following difference in the number of participants in each category:

practicum students	24
recent graduates (< 5 years out)	27
5-9 years out	18
> 9 years out	22

ANALYSIS OF THEORIES

The second page of the questionnaire gathered information concerning what counseling theories are used and were learned at UNO by practicum students and former graduates.

Table 3 reveals the frequency and percent of each theory used by participants in the four categories. It can be seen in Table 3 and Figure 1 that there are differences in the theories utilized as reported by participants in each of the

four categories. The theories most practicum students reported to be using were Client-centered and Behaviorism, 79% of practicum students reported to using Client-centered and 75% of practicum students reported to use Behaviorism. For < 5 year graduates it was Rational Emotive Therapy (81%); for 5-9 year graduates it was Adlerian (72%), Behaviorism (72%), and Eclecticism (72%); while Behaviorism (77%), Gestalt (64%), and Humanism (64%) were all high for > 9 year graduates. While Behaviorism was rather high for all categories, there was a lot of variability for other theories.

Table 3 Frequency and Percent of Theories Utilized
by Length of Time Out of Program

	Practicum students N = 24		< 5 years out N = 27		5-9 years out N = 18		> 9 years out N = 22	
THEORIES	<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>
Adlerian	16	67	20	74	13	72	11	50
Behaviorism	18	75	16	59	13	72	17	77
Client-centered	19	79	20	74	12	67	10	45
Existentialism	8	33	5	19	6	33	11	50
Feminist Therapy	4	17	7	26	6	33	10	45
Gestalt	15	63	8	30	10	56	14	64
Humanism	7	29	6	22	7	39	14	64
Multimodal	6	25	12	44	10	56	3	14
Psychoanalysis	1	4	2	7	4	22	9	41
Rational Emotive Therapy (RET)	15	63	22	81	11	61	8	36
Eclecticism	17	71	17	63	13	72	13	59

* Frequencies and percents do not total 100 due to participants being given the opportunity to mark more than one response. Percents rounded to the nearest whole number.

Total Theories Utilized

By Length of Time Out of Program

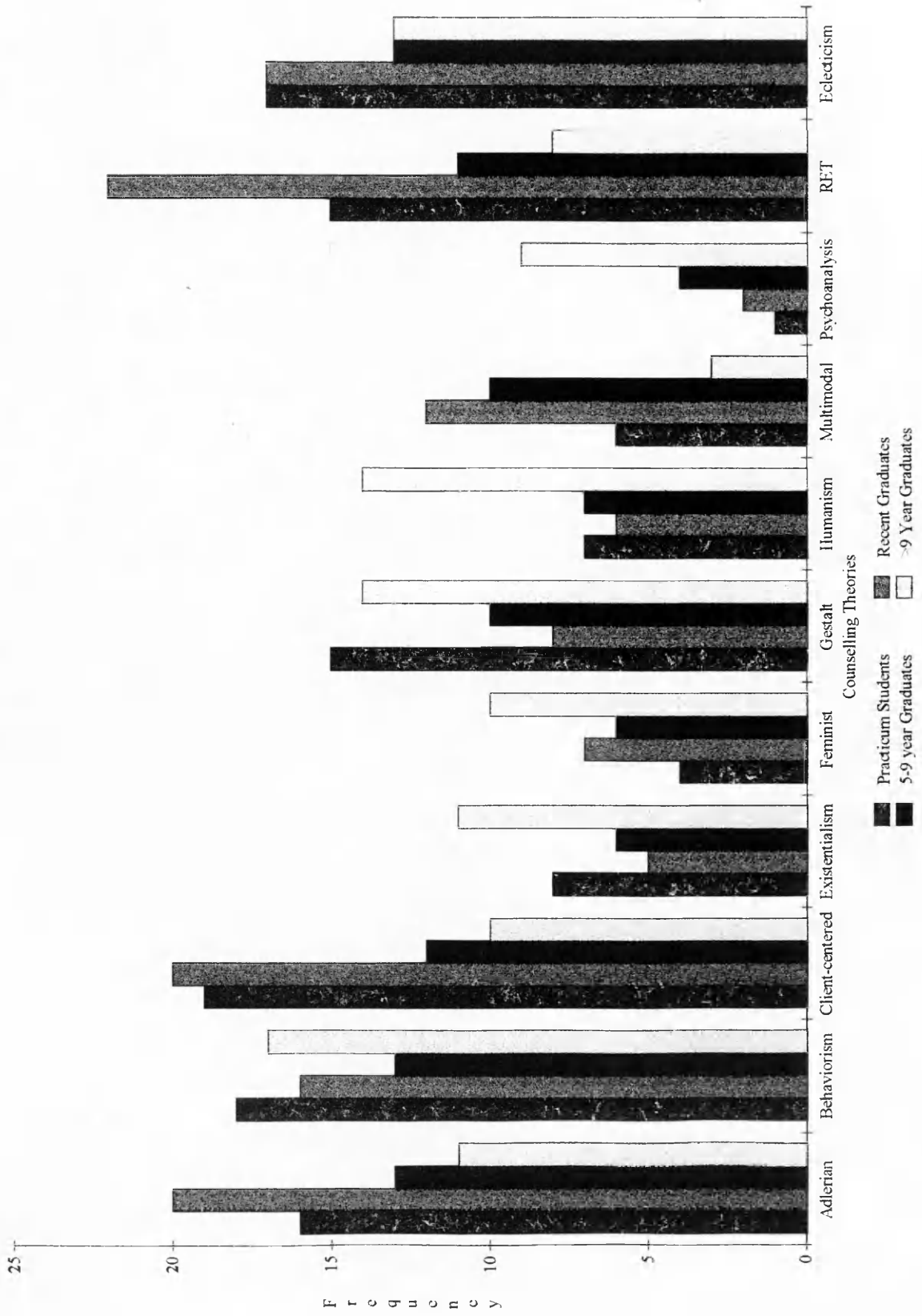


Figure 1
40b

Table 4 and Figure 2 show the theories reported to having been learned at UNO from each of the four categories. Adlerian and Client-centered were reported to being learned from UNO with rather high frequencies from all four categories. There are questions of why Existentialism and Gestalt were rated high from practicum students, while Multimodal and RET rated high from recent graduates. A possible explanation may be that the counseling program and instructors put more emphasis on these theories during these time frames. The results from this study do not answer these questions. There was a high number of practicum students reporting to have learned Psychoanalysis from UNO, one would have expected this to be lower for such a traditional theory.

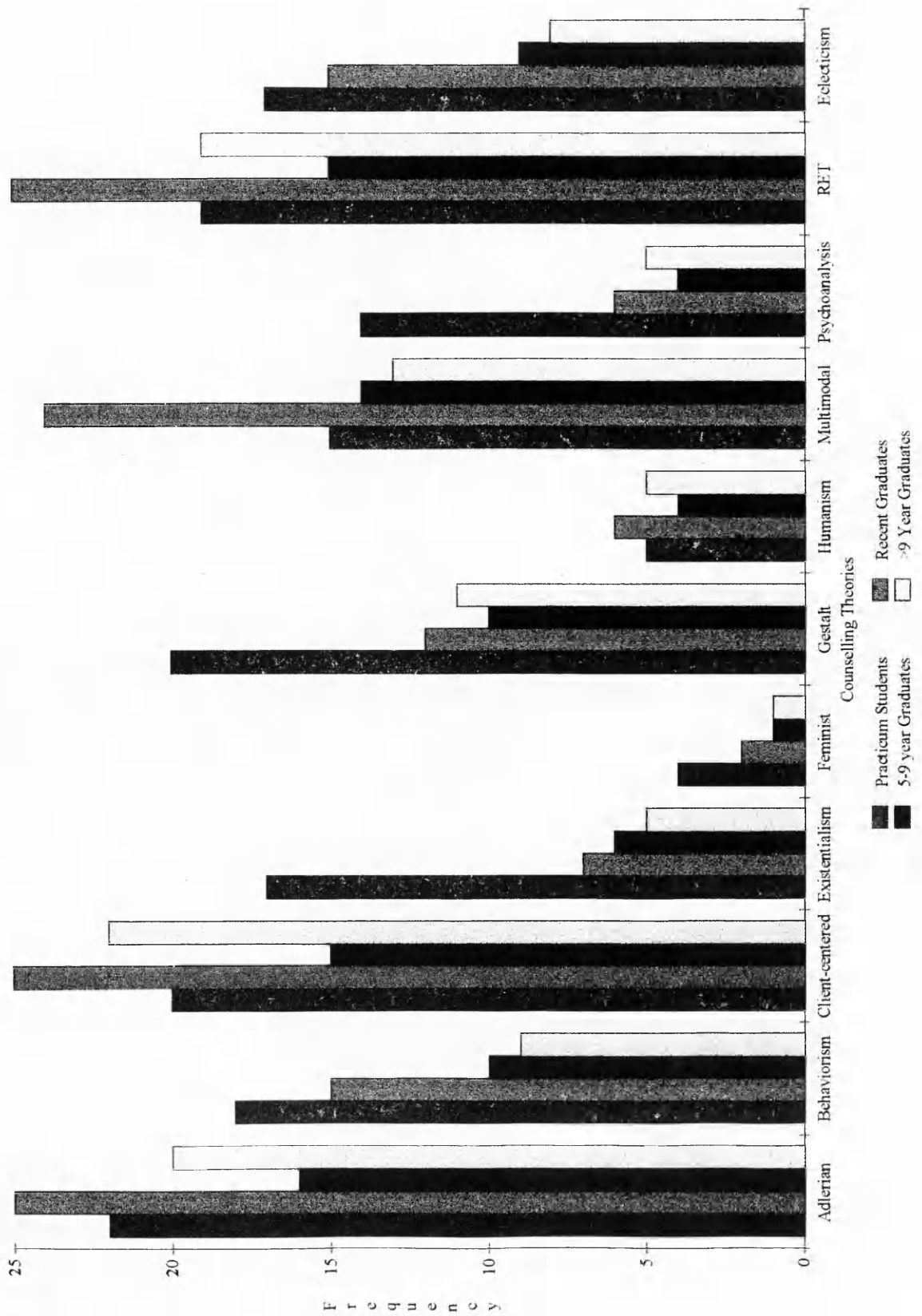
Table 4 Frequency and Percent of Theories Learned at UNO
by Length of Time Out of Program

THEORIES	Practicum students N = 24		< 5 years out N = 27		5-9 years out N = 18		> 9 years out N = 22	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Adlerian	22	92	25	93	16	89	20	91
Behaviorism	18	75	15	56	10	56	9	41
Client-centered	20	83	25	93	15	83	22	100
Existentialism	17	71	7	26	6	33	5	23
Feminist Therapy	4	17	2	7	1	6	1	5
Gestalt	20	83	12	44	10	56	11	50
Humanism	5	21	6	22	4	22	5	23
Multimodal	15	63	24	89	14	78	13	59
Psychoanalysis	14	58	6	22	4	22	5	23
Rational Emotive Therapy (RET)	19	79	25	93	15	83	19	86
Eclecticism	17	71	15	56	9	50	8	36

* Frequencies and percents do not total 100 due to participants being given the opportunity to mark more than one response. Percents rounded to the nearest whole number.

Figure 2
42b

Theories Learned at UNO
By Length of Time Out of the Program



From Table 5 and Figure 3 a difference can be seen when comparing the means for theories used to theories learned at UNO. Practicum students report to have learned (15.54) more than what they are using (11.45). The same is true for recent graduates (to an even less degree), and in Category 3 (former graduates between 5-9 years out) a difference occurs in that they report to be using more than what was learned at UNO. The same is true for participants in Category #4 (> 9 years out).

These results do show that as time out of the program increases the participants in this study report fewer theories as being ones they learned from UNO.

Table 5 Means of Theories Learned and Used by Length of Time Out of Program

	Practicum Students	< 5 Years Out	5 - 9 Years Out	> 9 Years Out
Theories Used	11.45	12.27	9.55	10.91
Theories Learned at UNO	15.54	14.73	9.45	10.73

Theories Learned and Used
By Length of Time Out of Program

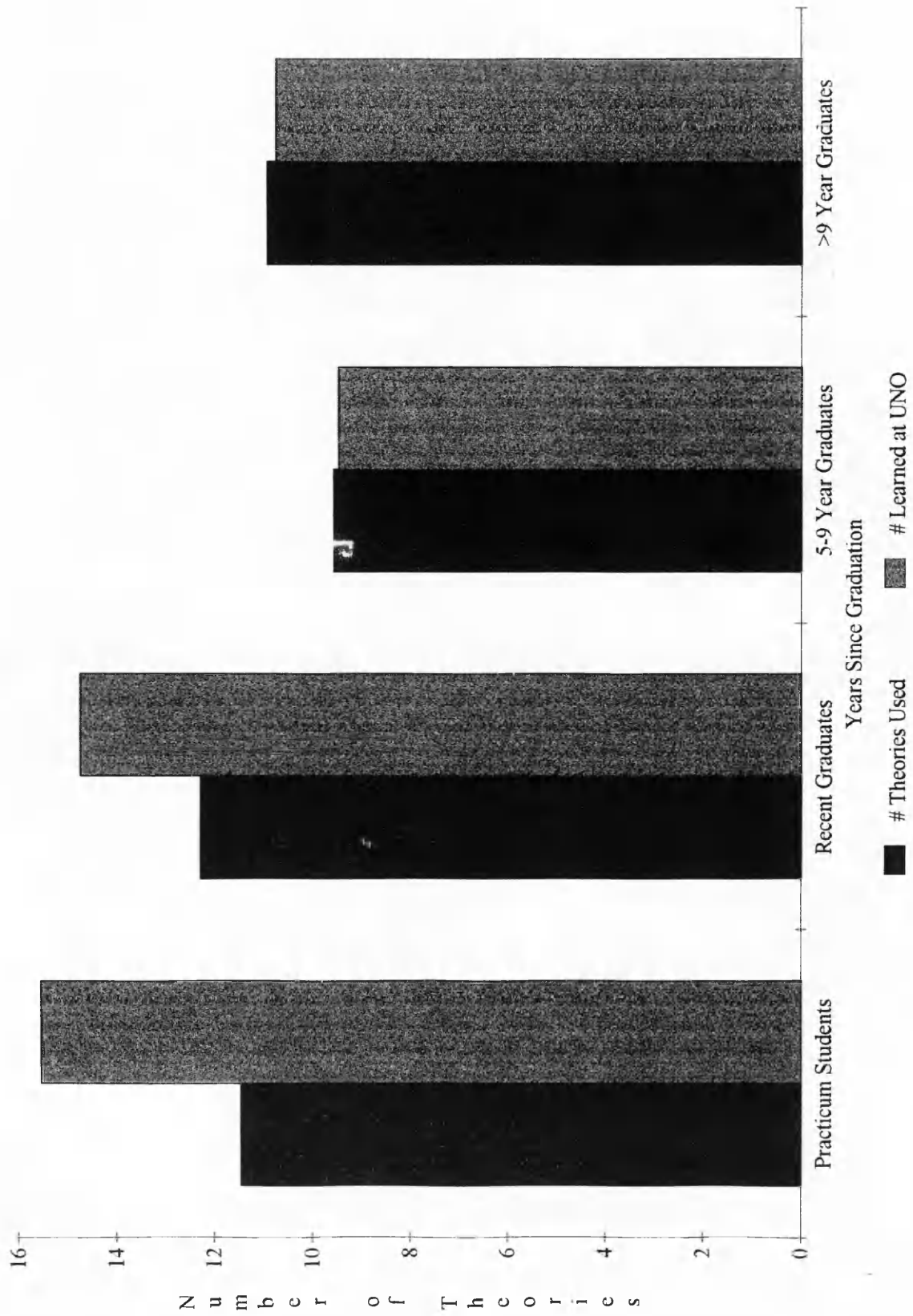


Figure 3
43b

Additional Theories

Question Twelve allowed participants to list any additional theories not already included in the list. There were differences between the four categories as can be seen here:

1. Practicum students added brief and solution based therapy (frequency = 5).
2. Recent graduates added brief therapy (frequency = 9), (family systems = 2).
3. Former graduates (5-9 years) added brief therapy (frequency = 11), transactional analysis (frequency = 6), reality therapy (frequency = 2), and family systems (frequency = 2).
4. Former graduates (> 9 years) added brief therapy (frequency = 7), family systems theory (frequency = 6), reality therapy (frequency = 2), cognitive behavioral (frequency = 5), transactional analysis (frequency = 8), inner child (frequency = 1), holistic (frequency = 1), transtheoretical (frequency = 1).

As can be seen there were many more write-ins from former graduates (Categories 3 & 4) than from practicum students and recent graduates (Categories 1 & 2). The results here do show that there is a gain in the number of theories used as the number of years out of the program increases.

Analysis of Column III

The last column provided participants an opportunity to write in a response identifying where each theory was learned if not at UNO. Analysis of this information revealed the following data:

Table 6 Additional Sources Where Theories Were Learned

Source	Practicum Students	< 5 Years	5-9 Years	> 9 Years
Book	2	5	17	21
Employment	2	3	11	9
Seminar	1	2	8	10
Colleague	2	1	6	9
Workshop	3	4	15	17
Another School or Program	2	2	4	5
Church	0	0	2	0
Nursing	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	12	17	63	72

It can be seen from analyzing Table 6 that participants report an increase in outside sources of information as years out of UNO's program increase.

Practicum students and recent graduates report to using fewer outside sources in their knowledge about counseling theories than do former graduates.

The two sources of information most commonly used by participants were books and workshops. Twenty-three participants (25% of total respondents) specifically identified the Adlerian workshop/training program as a source of outside learning in the area of counseling theory.

Analysis of Question 13

This was an open-ended question aimed at identifying the theoretical approach followed by each participant's practicum instructor. Points of interest were what theoretical approaches are practicum instructors following, and do students follow by using the same theoretical approach. The results to this analysis revealed the following data and is listed as orientation of instructor, frequency, yes or no -- does the participant also use it:

1. Practicum Students

Adlerian	(1)	yes
Behaviorism	(2)	yes
Client-centered	(1)	no
Eclectic	(3)	yes
Existentialism	(1)	yes

Gestalt	(5)	yes
Humanism	(1)	yes
REI	(1)	yes

All but one practicum student uses the same theory their practicum instructor follows.

2. Recent Graduates

Adlerian	(3)	(2) yes (1) no
Behaviorism	(3)	yes
Client-centered	(3)	yes
Eclectic	(2)	yes
Gestalt	(1)	yes
RET	(4)	yes
Brief therapy	(1)	no

Only two recent graduates do not use the same theory their practicum instructor uses. All others do use the same theory.

3. Former Graduates (5-9 years)

Adlerian	(3)	(1) yes (2) no
Behaviorism	(1)	yes
Client-centered	(2)	no
Eclectic	(2)	yes

Existentialism	(1)	no
Gestalt	(2)	no
Humanism	(1)	no
Cognitive Behavioral	(1)	yes

Five former graduates are using the same theory and eight are not.

4. Former graduates (> 9 years)

Adlerian	(2)	no
Behaviorism	(1)	no
Client-centered	(4)	(1) yes (3) no
Eclectic	(1)	yes
Existentialism	(1)	yes
Gestalt	(2)	no
Humanism	(1)	yes
Cognitive Behavioral	(1)	yes
Transactional Analysis	(1)	yes

Six former graduates are using the same theory as their former practicum instructors and eight are not.

The data from this question reveal that more practicum students and recent graduates are using the same theory their practicum instructors follow, while fewer

former graduates report to be using the same theory that their practicum instructors follow.

ANALYSIS OF TECHNIQUES

The third page of the questionnaire gathered information concerning what counseling techniques are used and were learned at UNO by practicum students and former graduates.

Table 7 shows the frequency and percent of each technique used by participants in the four categories. Table 7 and Figure 4 show that the Client-centered technique and attending skills are the most widely used techniques from all four categories, such as; empathy, paraphrase, genuineness, reflection of feeling, and unconditional positive regard.

Techniques that were low from all categories were free association and shame attacking. Practicum students and recent graduates had a higher reporting in the use of Desert Island and B.A.S.I.C. I.D. techniques than did former graduates.

Table 7 Frequency and Percent of Techniques Utilized
by Length of Time Out of Program

TECHNIQUES	Practicum Students N = 24		< 5 Years Out N = 27		5-9 Years Out N = 18		> 9 Years Out N = 22	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Analysis of early recollections	11	46	16	59	9	50	10	45
Analysis of ego states	10	42	8	30	7	39	10	45
Analysis of family ordinal positions	15	63	19	70	14	78	10	45
Analysis of life scripts	11	46	16	59	11	61	10	45
Analysis of transference	9	38	5	19	8	44	12	55
Assertiveness training	18	75	20	74	15	83	19	86
Cognitive restructuring	20	83	19	70	15	83	16	73
Confrontation	21	88	23	85	17	94	19	86
Contingency contracts	11	46	16	59	8	44	18	82
Deserted island fantasy technique	7	29	12	44	1	6	1	5
Determining B.A.S.I.C. I.D.	5	21	11	41	1	6	0	0
Disputing irrational beliefs	22	92	18	67	15	83	16	73
Double chair work	14	58	13	48	10	56	14	64
Dream analysis	3	16	8	30	13	72	15	68
Empathy	23	96	26	96	18	100	21	95
Free association	2	8	3	11	5	28	10	45
Gender role analysis	5	21	12	44	11	61	12	56
Guided imagery	13	54	14	52	15	83	15	68
Paradoxical intention	9	38	7	26	11	61	14	64
Paraphrasing	21	88	26	96	18	100	20	91
Presenting genuineness	23	96	26	96	18	100	21	95
Reflection of feelings	23	96	27	100	18	100	22	100
Relaxation methods	16	67	17	63	17	94	19	86
Role playing	18	75	16	59	12	67	19	86
Self disclosures	22	92	23	85	17	94	18	82
Shame attacking exercises	5	21	4	15	5	28	6	27
Systematic desensitization	8	33	8	30	9	50	16	73
Unconditional positive regard	23	96	26	96	18	100	22	100

* Frequency and percents do not total 100 due to participants being given the opportunity to mark more than one response. Percents rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 8 and Figure 5 show that practicum students and recent graduates attribute more learning of technique to UNO's program, than do former graduates in Categories 3 and 4.

Total Techniques Utilized

By Length of Time Out of Program

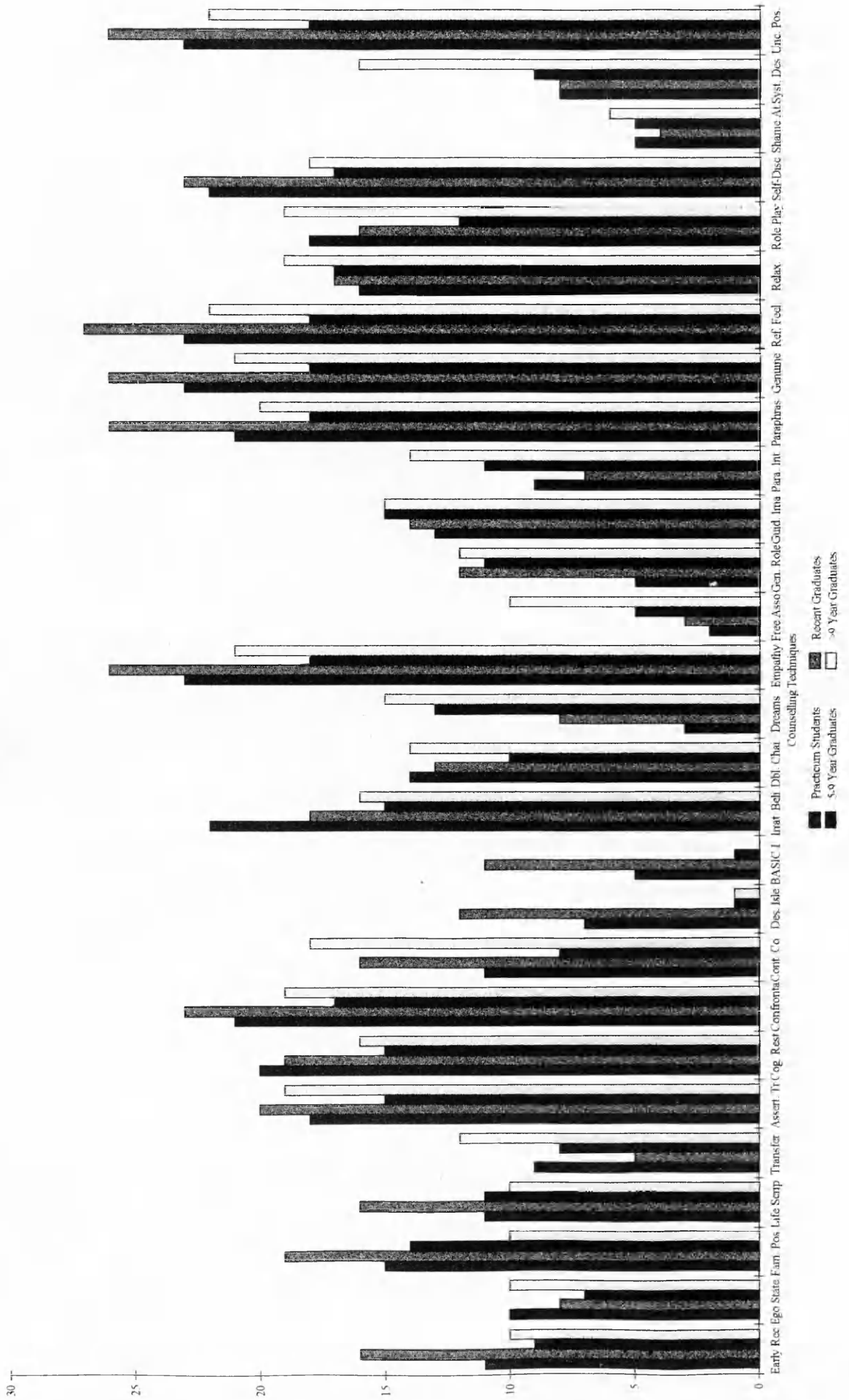


Table 8 Frequency and Percent of Techniques Learned at UNO
by Length of Time Out of Program

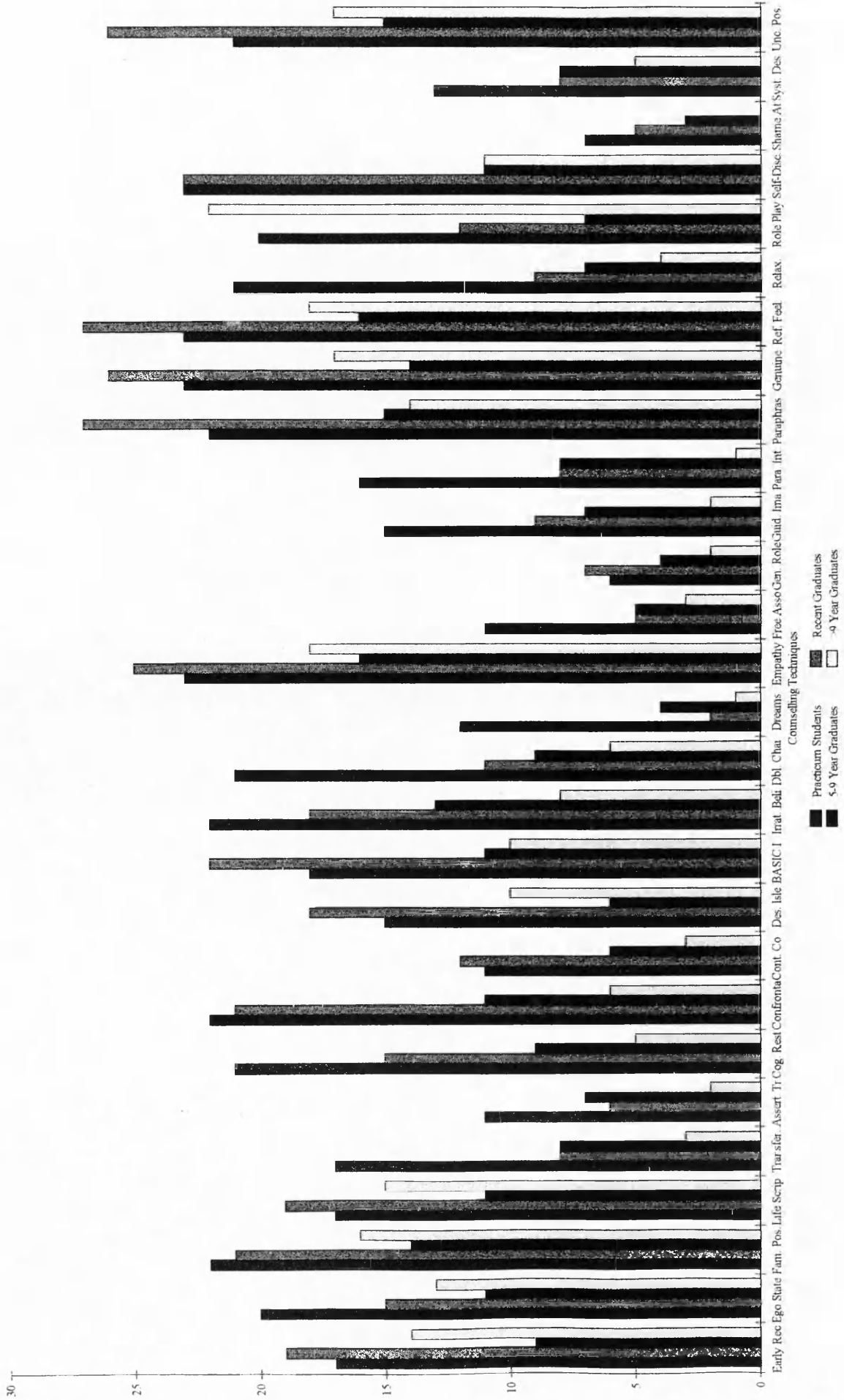
TECHNIQUES	Practicum Students N = 24		< 5 Years Out N = 27		5-9 Years Out N = 28		> 9 Years Out N = 22	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Analysis of early recollections	17	71	19	70	9	50	14	64
Analysis of ego states	20	83	15	56	11	61	13	59
Analysis of family ordinal positions	22	92	21	78	14	78	16	73
Analysis of life scripts	17	71	19	70	11	61	15	68
Analysis of transference	17	71	8	30	8	44	3	14
Assertiveness training	11	46	6	22	7	39	2	9
Cognitive restructuring	21	88	15	56	9	50	5	23
Confrontation	22	92	21	78	11	61	6	27
Contingency contracts	11	46	12	44	6	33	3	14
Deserted island fantasy technique	15	63	18	67	6	33	10	45
Determining B.A.S.I.C. I.D.	18	75	22	81	11	61	10	45
Disputing irrational beliefs	22	92	18	67	13	72	8	36
Double chair work	21	88	11	41	9	50	6	27
Dream analysis	12	50	2	7	4	22	1	5
Empathy	23	96	25	93	16	89	18	82
Free association	11	46	5	19	5	28	3	14
Gender role analysis	6	25	7	26	4	22	2	9
Guided imagery	15	63	9	33	7	39	2	9
Paradoxical intention	16	67	8	30	8	44	1	5
Paraphrasing	22	92	27	100	15	83	14	64
Presenting genuineness	23	96	26	96	14	78	17	77
Reflection of feelings	23	96	27	100	16	89	18	82
Relaxation methods	21	88	9	33	7	39	4	18
Role playing	20	83	12	44	7	39	11	50
Self disclosures	23	96	23	85	11	61	11	50
Shame attacking exercises	7	29	5	19	3	17	0	0
Systematic desensitization	13	54	8	30	8	44	5	23
Unconditional positive regard	21	88	26	96	15	83	17	77

* Frequency and percents do not total 100 due to participants being given the opportunity to mark more than one response. Percents rounded to the nearest whole number.

From Table 9 and Figure 6 a difference can be seen when comparing the means for techniques used to techniques learned at UNO. Practicum students report to have learned more techniques (17.50) than what they are using (13.86).

Techniques Learned at UNO

By Length of Time Out of Program



Then there is a change with recent graduates (< 5 years) in that the mean is slightly higher for techniques used (15.68) than it is for techniques learned (15.14). There is an increase in this difference with 5-9 years out, and an even greater increase in this difference with > 9 years out.

This information does show that as time out of the program increases the participants in this study report fewer techniques as being ones they learned at UNO.

Table 9 Means of Techniques Learned and Used
by Length of Time Out of Program

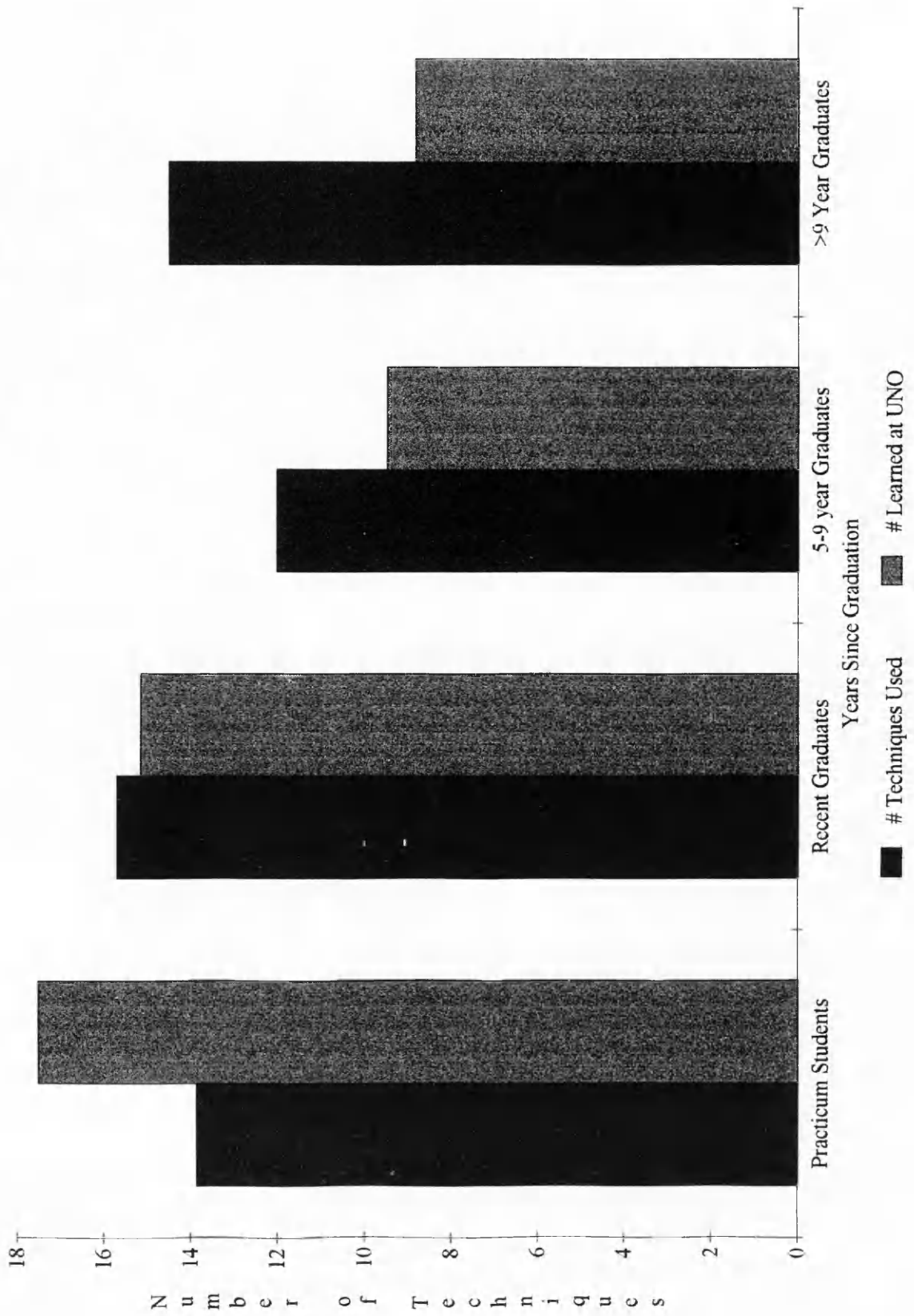
	Practicum Students	< 5 Years Out	5 - 9 Years Out	> 9 Years Out
Techniques Used	13.86	15.68	12.00	14.46
Techniques Learned at UNO	17.50	15.14	9.46	8.79

Additional Techniques

Question Twenty-nine allowed participants to list any additional techniques not already included in the list. The information given was not the same between the four categories as can be seen here:

Figure 6
52b

Techniques Learned and Used
By Length of time Out of Program



1. Practicum students added humor (frequency = 1), reframing (frequency = 1), exceptions to the rule (frequency = 1)
2. Recent graduates none were added
3. Former graduates (5-9) added homework assignments (frequency = 1), journaling/mood logs/writing (frequency = 6), art/drawing (frequency = 3), play therapy (frequency = 2)
4. Former graduates (>9) added journaling/writing (frequency = 12), crisis intervention (frequency = 1), scripture (frequency = 1), movies as metaphors (frequency = 1), creating personal ceremonies (frequency = 1), behavior modification (frequency = 3), grief and mourning techniques (frequency = 1), cognitive level, Rt./Lt. brain techniques (frequency = 1), family sculpting (frequency = 2)

As can be seen there were many more write-ins from former graduates (Categories 3 & 4) than from practicum students and recent graduates (Categories 1 & 2).

These results do show a larger variety in the techniques used as years out of the program increases. The techniques used by former graduates also show creativity.

Analysis of Column III

The last column provided participants an opportunity to write in a response identifying where each technique was learned if not at UNO. Analysis of this information revealed the following data:

Table 10 Additional Sources Where Techniques Were Learned

Source	Practicum Students	< 5 Years	5-9 Years	> 9 Years
Book	6	10	11	17
Employment	3	6	10	12
Seminar	4	7	7	6
Colleague	2	1	5	3
Workshop	4	9	15	17
Another School or Program	0	2	6	6
Group Experience	2	1	0	6
Personal Counseling	0	3	9	8
Audio Tapes	0	0	3	6
Videos	0	1	1	0
Church	0	0	0	2
Self Taught	0	0	6	2
TOTAL	21	40	73	85

It can be seen from analyzing Table 10 that participants report an increase in outside sources of information as years out of UNO's program increase.

Practicum students and recent graduates report to using fewer outside sources in their knowledge about counseling techniques than do former graduates.

The two sources of information having the highest frequencies in learning techniques were books and workshops. This was also true in outside sources for learning theory, however an overall increase occurred in the outside sources utilized in learning counseling techniques. Thirty-two participants (35% of total respondents) specifically identified the Adlerian workshop/training program as a source of outside learning in the area of counseling techniques.

ASSUMPTIONS

All the instruments used in this study were self-reporting measures on what techniques and theories individuals report to be using as practicing counselors and may not accurately reflect their behaviors. Participants may or may not be aware of their own behaviors. It was also an assumption that participants had an understanding of the theories and techniques included in this study.

It was assumed the theories and techniques courses have been consistent in the information provided to students throughout the history of this program. This

would need to be investigated via previous instructors and records at the registrar's office.

A final factor to discuss is memory. Data in Figures 3 & 6 reveal a decline in reports from former graduates as to what theories and techniques were learned at UNO. This may be partially due to a memory factor but is unlikely considering the data reported in Column III for both theories and techniques (Tables 6 & 10). This information revealed former graduates attribute some of their learning to other sources than UNO.

LIMITATIONS

Respondent cooperation may have been limited due to an absence of follow-up. Results may be biased due to the selection process. Questionnaires were sent only to residents of Omaha and only to agency counselors, therefore the results may not be reflective of the whole population of counselors.

Other limiting factors include structure of the questionnaire and procedure of implementation.

STRUCTURAL LIMITS

- There were many written responses added under Questions 5 & 6, i.e. nature and setting of services provided. More responses should have been available for selection, particularly individual for Question 5 and private practice for Question 6.
- The design of the questionnaire gathered nominal data rather than interval. The participants were given the opportunity to make more than one selection. Nominal data does not allow for independent responses therefore chi-square was not appropriate for analysis.
- The demographic information indicates participants are mainly white non-Hispanic females therefore this study is lacking in cultural and gender diversity.

PROCEDURAL LIMIT

- Eleven questionnaires were not used because they came in after the requested return date and the results had already been analyzed. A solution to this limitation would be to allow more time between the return date and data analysis.

A final limitation, previously mentioned in Chapters I and II, was described as “know thyself”. The literature in the area of teaching counseling theories and techniques notes a need for counselors to become aware of their beliefs, values, views, etc. The current study did not provide information dealing with this topic, because it is difficult, if not impossible to assess (see recommendations in Chapter V).

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to compare the theories and techniques used by practicum students and former graduates. This study also analyzed what theories and techniques are reported to having been learned at UNO, as well as having been learned elsewhere in the field of counseling. The results of this thesis advance our understanding of theories and techniques used and learned in the field of counseling.

The results to the descriptive data analysis support the idea that persons in the field of counseling become more diversified in their use of theories and techniques as time passes. Although memory may be a factor, the results to Column III of the questionnaire reveal that former graduates attribute a larger number of theories and techniques were learned outside the UNO program.

CONCLUSION

This investigation advances our knowledge in the understudied area of theories and techniques taught in counseling education programs. It has been

shown that counselors become more diversified in their use of theories and techniques as time out of their educational program increases.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A recommendation for future replication of this study would be to rewrite the questionnaire providing a Likert scale for each theory and each technique (ex. "I use this technique always, sometimes, never). Such a scale would yield a collection of interval data which would then allow the use of inferential statistical analysis.

Another recommendation for further investigation would be to repeat the same study longitudinally, i.e. use the same subjects from their practicum experience on through to retirement, surveying their use of theories and techniques every five years.

A final recommendation is for counseling education programs to continue analyzing teaching methods that not only teach traditional theories and techniques but also guide students into self understanding.

Chapters I and II reflect the importance that students should familiarize themselves with the major approaches to counseling practice to acquire a basis for developing their own personal style of counseling. A counselor who lacks a solid foundation in the current thinking and research and who also lacks a solid set of

on which to base counseling is doing nothing more than applying techniques to help clients solve their problems.

Developing one's own view of the counseling process is a highly demanding, never-ending task. A personal theory must be continually reviewed and revised to include new experiences and insights that a counselor acquires during years of experience. At the beginning, however, new counselors must follow some particular steps to develop initial personal views. First they must familiarize themselves with the current major approaches to counseling practice.

In developing a personal view of counseling, counselors must know their own assumptions about the nature of people. It seems essential that counselors explore in depth their own values, attitudes, and beliefs about what constitutes a good life, what people are like, and what they themselves are like. They can then relate understandings to their goals for counseling which they can in turn match strategies and techniques to reach those goals most effectively. The question is how to teach this to counseling students.

Counseling education programs should be designed to help counseling students build a personal theory of counseling. Students should begin by examining their own views of human nature and develop a clear picture of themselves as people, since their own experience, personality, characteristics, and

view of nature will influence their theoretical approach, which in turn will determine their selection and use of techniques.

In his book, Counseling the Alcoholic, Joseph Perez (1985) follows this view of developing a style that is comfortable and fits with the counselor's own personality. He believes that in counseling, the counselor is the ultimate technique and is the personification of the counseling process to the client. He states that counselors should operate from a solid frame of reference, having their own personal philosophy. He provides the following guidelines to help counselors develop their own philosophy:

1. What is your definition of counseling?
2. What are the appropriate goals of counseling?
3. How would you define your own role as a helper?
4. What are the most important functions of a counselor?

These are just a few of the questions provided.

By answering these questions counseling students can begin the life-long process of getting to "know thyself". Developing a personal philosophy of counseling involves constant self-examination.

Perhaps counseling educators could best support counseling trainees by using the Perez guideline or something similar in the training of counselors. Attention could be given to each of the questions. Counseling

students would be able to think through some of these issues and be better prepared in answering the question

“What is your theoretical orientation or philosophy of counseling?”

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

**Cover letter & questionnaire
sent to former graduates**

June 19, 1995

Dr. Joe L. Davis
Committee Chair

Dear Former Graduate,

I am a graduate student completing a Master's Degree in Agency Counseling at U.N.O. As a final requirement for my degree, I am writing a **thesis** titled:

**A comparative study of counseling theories and techniques
used by practicum students and those used by former graduates.**

This study is designed to determine what theories and techniques, taught in the U.N.O. Counseling Education Program, are currently being used by graduates in the field of counseling. As a former U.N.O. counseling education student, your response is vital to this study. Please respond to the following seven questions on this page.

Demographics

1. Your Age _____ 2. Years of experience _____

Please place an x by the appropriate response for each of the following:

3. _____ Male or _____ Female
4. Ethnicity: _____ White Non-Hispanic _____ African-American
_____ Hispanic _____ Asian _____ Other, please identify
5. Identify the nature of the counseling/therapy services you provide
_____ chemical dependency _____ psychiatric _____ family
_____ /addictions _____ sex offenses _____ marriage
_____ pastoral _____ other, briefly describe
6. Identify the setting in which you provide counseling therapy services
_____ clinic/hospital _____ residential group home _____ other,
_____ in-home _____ community agency _____ briefly describe
7. **Are you currently providing counseling or therapy as a profession?**
_____ Yes If so, please take a few minutes of your time to fill out the enclosed questionnaire
and return it using the self-addressed, postage-paid envelope, also enclosed.
_____ No If not, do not fill out the questionnaire, simply mark No and return using the
postage-paid envelope.

Please return all three pages within three weeks (by July 10), using the enclosed envelope.

I fully appreciate your cooperation and the use of your time.

A sincere thank you,


Pamela Jo Thompson

Instructions: For Columns I and II place an x under the appropriate response, i.e. Yes or No. For Column III, please write in your response.

	Column I		Column II		Column III
	Do you use this theory in your work with clients?		Was this theory learned from UNO's counseling education program?		If learned elsewhere, please write it here (i.e. workshop, seminar, place of employment, book, colleague, etc.
THEORIES	YES	NO	YES	NO	
1. Adlerian					
2. Behaviorism					
3. Client-centered					
4. Existentialism					
5. Feminist Therapy					
6. Gestalt					
7. Humanism					
8. Multimodal					
9. Psychoanalysis					
10. Rational Emotive Therapy (RET)					
11. ECLECTICISM					
12. Please List Any Others					

13. What theoretical approach did your practicum or internship instructor most closely follow?

Instructions: For Columns I and II place an x under the appropriate response, i.e. Yes or No. For Column III, please write in your response.

	Column I		Column II		Column III
	Do you use this theory in your work with clients?		Was this theory learned from UNO's counseling education program?		If learned elsewhere, please write it here (i.e. workshop, seminar, place of employment, book, colleague, etc.
TECHNIQUES	YES	NO	YES	NO	
1. Analysis of early recollections					
2. Analysis of ego states					
3. Analysis of family ordinal positions					
4. Analysis of life scripts					
5. Analysis of transference					
6. Assertiveness training					
7. Cognitive restructuring					
8. Confrontation					
9. Contingency contracts					
10. Deserted island fantasy technique					
11. Determining B.A.S.I.C. I.D.					
12. Disputing irrational beliefs					
13. Double chair work					
14. Dream analysis					
15. Empathy					
16. Free association					
17. Gender role analysis					
18. Guided imagery					
19. Paradoxical intention					
20. Paraphrasing					
21. Presenting genuineness					
22. Reflection of feelings					
23. Relaxation methods					
24. Role playing					
25. Self disclosures					
26. Shame attacking exercises					
27. Systematic desensitization					
28. Unconditional positive regard					
29. Please list any others					

Appendix B

**Cover letter & questionnaire
sent to practicum students**

June 19, 1995

Dear Practicum Student:

I am a graduate student completing a Master's Degree in Agency Counseling at U.N.O. As a final requirement for my degree, I am writing a **thesis** titled:

**A comparative study of counseling theories and techniques
used by practicum students and those used by former graduates.**

This study is designed to determine what theories and techniques, taught in the U.N.O. Counseling Education Program, are currently being used by graduates in the field of counseling. As a counseling education student, your response is vital to this study. Please respond to the following questions on this page.

Demographics

1. Your Age _____ 2. Years of experience _____

Please place an x by the appropriate response for each of the following:

3. _____ Male or _____ Female
4. Ethnicity: _____ White Non-Hispanic _____ African-American
_____ Hispanic _____ Asian _____ Other, please identify
5. Identify the nature of the counseling/therapy services you provide
_____ chemical dependency _____ psychiatric _____ family
_____ /addictions _____ sex offenses _____ marriage
_____ pastoral _____ other, briefly describe
6. Identify the setting in which you provide counseling therapy services
_____ clinic/hospital _____ residential group home _____ other,
_____ in-home _____ community agency _____ briefly describe

Please return all three pages.

I fully appreciate your cooperation and the use of your time.

A sincere thank you.


Pamela Jo Thompson

Instructions: For Columns I and II place an *x* under the appropriate response, i.e. Yes or No. For Column III, please write in your response.

	Column I		Column II		Column III
	Do you use this theory in your work with clients?		Was this theory learned from UNO's counseling education program?		
THEORIES	YES	NO	YES	NO	If learned elsewhere, please write it here (i.e. workshop, seminar, place of employment, book, colleague, etc.
1. Adlerian					
2. Behaviorism					
3. Client-centered					
4. Existentialism					
5. Feminist Therapy					
6. Gestalt					
7. Humanism					
8. Multimodal					
9. Psychoanalysis					
10. Rational Emotive Therapy (RET)					
11. ECLECTICISM					
12. Please List Any Others					

13. What theoretical approach does your practicum or internship instructor most closely follow?

Instructions: For Columns I and II place an x under the appropriate response, i.e. Yes or No. For Column III, please write in your response.

	Column I		Column II		Column III
	Do you use this theory in your work with clients?		Was this theory learned from UNO's counseling education program?		If learned elsewhere, please write it here (i.e. workshop, seminar, place of employment, book, colleague, etc.
TECHNIQUES	YES	NO	YES	NO	
1. Analysis of early recollections					
2. Analysis of ego states					
3. Analysis of family ordinal positions					
4. Analysis of life scripts					
5. Analysis of transference					
6. Assertiveness training					
7. Cognitive restructuring					
8. Confrontation					
9. Contingency contracts					
10. Deserted island fantasy technique					
11. Determining B.A.S.I.C. I.D.					
12. Disputing irrational beliefs					
13. Double chair work					
14. Dream analysis					
15. Empathy					
16. Free association					
17. Gender role analysis					
18. Guided imagery					
19. Paradoxical intention					
20. Paraphrasing					
21. Presenting genuineness					
22. Reflection of feelings					
23. Relaxation methods					
24. Role playing					
25. Self disclosures					
26. Shame attacking exercises					
27. Systematic desensitization					
28. Unconditional positive regard					
29. Please list any others					