STUDENT PERSPECTIVES OF THE INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND LEARNING IN AN ONLINE COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM: A PROGRAM EVALUATION

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment Of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University

May 2016
ABSTRACT

The integration of faith and learning is a valued aspect of Christian education and holds particular importance in training professional counselors. Currently, literature related to integration learning has been limited to residential environments, and students’ expectations and most valued aspects of learning integration have received little attention even in this more traditional learning format. Additionally, online counselor education programs are growing, making the need for exploration in this area increasingly important. The following quantitative study explored student perceptions of integration learning in counselor education in an online environment. Building off of previous survey design collected in a resident environment, student ratings of importance as well as satisfaction with integrative teaching practices in an online master’s-level professional counseling program were explored. A two-factor solution of student values (importance) that mirrored previous research was observed. Participants demonstrated satisfaction and in each factor area of integrative teaching practice. No disparity between what participants rated as important and how they rated satisfaction in each area was observed.

Keywords: integration, pedagogy, online learning, instructor interaction, higher education
Dedication

Melanie Van Wynsberg, my keeper, my soul mate, this dissertation is dedicated to you. You’ve been there for me from the start, even as I questioned completing this degree. Since the start of this program you’ve blessed me with support, love, and two beautiful babies. You’ve supported me in so many ways, waiting up for me to go to bed as I’ve written, graded, and studied (in fact, you’re doing that as I type this). So yes, my love… in a way, this is “your Ph.D.” too.
Acknowledgements

As I reflect on all of those deserving to be included in this section I feel hesitant to even make an attempt at this. There are so many people who have poured into me selflessly. I am truly indebted to so many for this. First, I thank my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Fernando Garzon, for fostering my development as a student throughout my studies and for being an enormous support and inspiration. Dr. Fred Volk and Dr. Allen Meyer, also members of the committee, you have both played a larger role than that in my life, helping me to develop as a leader and a person. I thank all of the faculty members of the Counseling department. Truly, each and every one of you has played an enormous role in my development as a person and professional. Drs. Steve Warren and Mark Myers, thank you for being wonderful leaders who have believed in me and have taken the time to help me grow.

I thank my parents, Christine Stryjak and Ron Van Wyensberg. Without the foundation you provided me this dissertation would never have happened. Thank you for your love and support through good times and challenges. I want to thank those friends and family that helped me to believe in myself, including my Michigan crew, my Charlotte, NC family members, and my wonderful Grandma Stryjak. Thank you to my amazing and inspiring Ph.D. cohort, including my ad hoc Ph.D. “roommate” Dr. Josh Myers. We did it, buddy!

Finally, dear Jesus, I thank you. I cannot imagine my life without you. You have so certainly made this all possible, and you absolutely put it all in perspective. Thank you for all of the relationships represented in the paragraphs above, and thank you for being my rock and my reason.
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List of Abbreviations

American Counseling Association (ACA)

Counsel for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)

Face to Face (FTF)

Institutional review Board (IRB)

Integration of Faith and Learning (IFL)

Integrative Teaching Practices (ITPs)

Learning Management System (LMS)

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The integration of faith and learning (IFL) is a key construct to any Christian-based counseling program. An understanding of spiritual issues in counseling is important in general as well; research suggests that most people want to have their spiritual values integrated into counseling (Dobmeier & Reiner, 2012; Hodge, 2013). Both the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the Counsel for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP) address the need for counselors to exercise self-awareness and to be competent in addressing the spiritual issues of clients. However, the concept of “integration” lacks consistency, not only in the literature, but also in practical academic application. Moreover, while students in Christian counseling programs expect to learn what integration is and how to “do integration,” little has been done to explore their expectations and how they actually learn in this area, and no research has yet appeared exploring student perceptions in an online environment, despite exponential growth in online learning.

Until recently, most of the research related to integration and learning in this field was theoretical in nature, lacking practical application for instructional practices (Sorenson, 1997). Over the last decade, a greater number of studies have begun to explore such aspects, most notably attempting to provide an understanding of how integrative teaching practices (ITPs) actually take place in the classroom (Adams, McMinn, & Thurston, 2014; Anderson, 2014; Anderson & Janzen, 2010; Aten, Boyer, & Tucker, 2007; Bailey, 2012; Brown & Wagener, 2004; Butman & Yarhouse, 2014; Cimbora, 2011; Conway, Lee, & O’Gorman, 2005; Cook & Leonard, 2014; Devers, 2013; Eriksson & Abernethy, 2014; Farnsworth, 1982; Flanagan, Kahn,
Studies of this nature have provided a step forward in understanding instructional practices taking place in integrative programs. This research serves to address some of the ambiguity surrounding the concept of integration. Still, most researchers tend to focus on IFL from a faculty perspective rather than the learner, leaving a gap in understanding as to what students in integrative programs expect and experience. Some works have begun to explore student perceptions (Burton & Nwosu, 2003; Garzon & Hall, 2012; Hall, Ripley, Garzon, & Mangis, 2009; Lawrence, Burton, & Nwosu, 2005; McMinn, Bearse, Heyne, & Staley, 2011; Ripley, Garzon, Hall, Mangis, & Murphy, 2009; Sites, 2008; Sorenson, 1997; Sorenson, Derflinger, Bufford, & McMinn, 2004; Staton, Sorenson, & Vande Kemp, 1998). All of these have focused on traditional face-to-face programs.

Faculty and students might be wasting time in the classroom when student expectations don’t line up with actual teaching practices (Ripley et al., 2009). Differences in what students and faculty see as important in these areas could mean issues in student retention and satisfaction (Morris, Smith, & Cejda, 2003; Schreiner, 2000). Student satisfaction with integration and a
sense of spiritual “fit” on a campus is a strong predictor or retention at Christian schools (Morris et al., 2003; Schreiner, 2000; Walter, 2000). Additionally, with recent growth in online education as a whole (Allen & Seaman, 2011) as well as online counselor education programs in particular (Reicherzer, Dixon-Saxon, & Trippany, 2009), it is becoming increasingly important to explore integration in an online Christian-based learning environment. Online student perceptions of integration have yet to be researched.

Many ITPs related to residential environments are easily adapted to online learning environments, for instance, the presentation of case studies containing spiritual issues. Learning activities may cross the residential-online boundary easily, yet relationships may prove to be more important in student learning than content delivery and learning activities. This is indicated by a small but growing body of research built upon Randall Sorenson’s (1994, 1997) lone theory of how students learn integration, which suggests that the professor-student relationship may be a mediating pathway in how students learn integration in face-to-face environments. How this translates to integration in online learning and how this may affect student satisfaction with their studies remains unexplored.

**Background**

Despite the ambiguity associated with integration as a construct, research indicates that professors have specific ideas about how to go about IFL in counseling and psychology (Adams et al., 2014; Anderson, 2014; Anderson & Janzen, 2010; Aten et al., 2007; Bailey, 2012; Brown & Wagener, 2004; Butman & Yarhouse, 2014; Cimbora, 2011; Conway et al., 2005; Cook & Leonard, 2014; Devers, 2013; Eriksson & Abernethy, 2014; Farnsworth, 1982; Flanagan et al., 2011; Francis & Dugger, 2014; Graham-Howard & Scott, 2011; Hagedorn & Gutierrez, 2009;
Iselin & Meteyard, 2010; Johnson & Hathaway, 2004; J. Jones, 2007; Kelleher, 2010; Manfred-Gilham, 2009; Marshall, 2010; Mathisen, 2003; Matthias, 2008; McMinn & Hill, 2011; Olson et al., 2011; Peterson, 2011; Poelstra, 2009; Quinn, 2010; Quinn et al., 2012; Reichard, 2013; Rieg, 2010; Ripley & Dwiwardani, 2014; Scrofani & Nordling, 2011; Simpson, 2011; Sites et al., 2009; Sorenson, 1994, 1997; Struthers, 2014; Tan, 2009; Tisdale et al., 2013; Trainor, 2006; Turns et al., 2013; Watson & Eveleigh, 2014; Wilkinson & Chamberlain, 2010; Wolf, 2011; Woods et al., 2012). Faculty report viewing IFL as occurring through general concepts such as strong clinical skill (Adams et al., 2014; Flanagan et al., 2011; Graham-Howard & Scott, 2011; Johnson & Hathaway, 2004; Olson et al., 2011), as well as self-awareness and personal formation (Conway et al., 2005; Farnsworth, 1982; Flanagan et al., 2011; Graham-Howard & Scott, 2011; Marshall, 2010; Ripley & Dwiwardani, 2014; Scrofani & Nordling, 2011; Trainor, 2006; Wolf, 2011). Specific learning activities have also been put forth, such as the use of case studies (Adams et al., 2014; Anderson, 2014; Hagedorn & Gutierrez, 2009; Manfred-Gilham, 2009; Tan, 2009) and discussions of secular concepts in the context of a Christian worldview (Watson & Eveleigh, 2014). This body of literature lends support to Joeckel and Chesnes’ (2010) report that professors believe they understand the concept of integration and do not find it difficult to integrate faith in learning in their teaching practices.

Research on IFL in an online setting is harder to come by, but there are a few examples of published material in this area. Many examples of online ITPs are exactly the same as those recommended for residential environments, such as exercises designed to challenge student assumptions and pre-determined beliefs (Wilkinson & Chamberlain, 2010). Interestingly, the majority of the works that can be found on online teaching focuses some attention on relational
factors, and faculty providing suggestions for connecting with online students specifically in the context of teaching integration (Anderson & Janzen, 2010; Quinn, 2010; Quinn et al., 2012).

Given the amount of faculty contributions in this area it is not surprising to find a diversity of views. There are certainly a variety of perspectives on integration in counseling, and Ream, Beaty, and Lion (2004) identify eight views of IFL itself (that is, the teaching and learning of integration as opposed to integration of counseling and faith). This diversity of teaching methods may have differing effects and effectiveness in student learning, but little research has focused on student ideas related to effective teaching practices in IFL. An empirically based theoretical model of how students learn integration is needed to provide a framework as a reference point for faculty teaching integration.

Currently, Randall Sorenson provides the only explicated theory as to how students learn integration. Sorenson’s (1997) research, based on student surveys, posits that the student-professor relationship is the mediating pathway for IFL. Others have built upon Sorenson’s theory and support the importance of the student-professor relationship in IFL (Burton & Nwosu, 2003; Garzon & Hall, 2012; Hall et al., 2009; Lawrence et al., 2005; McMinn et al., 2011; Ripley et al., 2009; Sites, 2008; Sorenson et al., 2004; Staton et al., 1998). Importantly, students in these studies have indicated that integration was taking place in their studies (Burton & Nwosu, 2003; Lawrence et al., 2005). Most of these studies showed at least some explicit support for Sorenson’s model, as students indicated that professor interactions were the most important examples of integration they saw (Burton & Nwosu, 2003), that integration was something carried out by the professor (Lawrence et al., 2005), and that professor traits were important to integration learning (Hall et al., 2009; Ripley et al., 2009; Sorenson et al., 2004; Staton et al., 1998).
The survey used in the quantitative work of Ripley et al. (2009) serves as a base for the current study’s survey. The instrument has undergone various iterations and revisions and has been employed in unpublished research on various student populations at the target school (Garzon, 2007, 2009, 2013, 2015). Different variations have contained 14-53 items, with the latest revision containing 21 items. The items address a variety of areas in student experience, including factors related to the learning environment, the professor, and practical application of their knowledge. Additional information on the survey’s development is provided in Chapter Three.

It is important to note that although Sorenson’s theory is not typically referred to in the faculty-published research related to IFL, many studies specifically mention the importance of the student-professor relationship (Anderson, 2014; Aten et al., 2007; Cook & Leonard, 2014; Devers, 2013; Eriksson & Abernethy, 2014; Flanagan et al., 2011; Iselin & Meteyard, 2010; J. Jones, 2007; Mathisen, 2003; Matthias, 2008; Olson et al., 2011; Poelstra, 2009; Ripley & Dwiwardani, 2014; Sites et al., 2009; Sorenson, 1994; Tisdale et al., 2013; Watson & Eveleigh, 2014; Woods et al., 2012), typically in the context of professor modeling. There is evidence that faculty sense the importance of the relationship between professors and students in online integration learning as well (Anderson & Janzen, 2010; Quinn, 2010; Quinn et al., 2012), albeit in a small number of sources. This may mean that professors intrinsically understand what Sorenson’s research indicates; relationship is key to learning. Still, more research is needed; how students learn integration continues to be largely unexplored, particularly in an online environment.

To summarize to date, research on IFL has focused mostly on residential faculty, practices, students, and environments, although a small amount of research on ITPs in an online
environment is available. In general, faculty express comfort with IFL as a whole and are able to point to specific teaching practices they employ. However, the rise of online education in both general and specifically Christian universities creates a distinct gap in the literature. Little attention been given to student IFL and no known research has yet been conducted on student expectations and preferred ITPs in an online learning environment (Dominguez, McMinn, & Moon, 2009; Garzon & Hall, 2012).

Clearly, there is much discussion in the academic community about integration. However, less exists on how integration is practically taught. Some work has been done to explicate professors’ models of integration and ITPs, but Sorenson’s is the only theoretical model of how students learn integration, and little has been done to explore student expectations and learning experiences in integration. While more studies on student ideas have appeared in recent years, none of these have explored online student perspectives of integration, despite the growth of online counselor education programs.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore online student perspectives on integration. Specifically, the study attempted to determine what types of teaching practices and aspects of the online learning environment are viewed as most helpful and valuable to students as they learn integration. This was accomplished by applying a modified version of Garzon’s (2007, 2009, 2013, 2015) student integration survey to an online population. The current study provides clarification as to what students think integration is and how it is best learned.
Research Questions

Research Question One:

What factors of integrative teaching practice (ITPs) values emerge as reliable constructs for a population of online graduate counseling students?

This question was meant to identify whether or not the factors identified by Garzon (2015) prove applicable to a new population of online graduate counseling students as they did in previous residential samples that have previously been explored. Items on each scale were examined for sufficient item total weighting for their scale. An exploratory factor analysis was also performed to investigate the possibility of a new emergent factor structure.

Research Question Two:

Which ITP factors emerge as most important to online graduate counseling students?

The identified ITP factors, whether the previously identified factors of Credible Integration or Mentoring or newly discovered factors were explored to determine which, if any, are found to be most important to online graduate counseling students? Exploring this could yield important information about what type of instructional practices are most valued by students in learning integration.

Research Question Three:

Are online counseling students satisfied with their school’s performance in the identified ITP factors?

In addition to determining which factors are most important to students, the students’ satisfaction with their school’s performance in these areas were also explored. This provided a
more detailed understanding of student perception of integration in their program regarding the satisfaction of delivery. Exploring both importance and satisfaction was important because while students may find an area important, they may not be satisfied with their experience in the area.

Research Question Four:

Is there a disparity between students’ ratings of importance and level of satisfaction of the ITP factors in their program?

The level of disparity between a student’s value and satisfaction is valuable information as it showed areas for possible improvement and indicates which areas of disparity would be most important to address. For example, an obvious and actionable area for necessary improvement would be indicated if the results show that students find an ITP factor very important yet do not feel satisfied in that ITP factor area.

Assumptions and Limitations

While the current study yielded important information related to integration in an online learning environment, its implications cannot be generalized beyond its stated hypotheses. Perhaps most importantly, this study did not seek to measure student performance in understanding or implementing skills and knowledge related to Christian integration. Instead, this research focused on the subjective level of satisfaction participants have with ITPs as well as their view of ITP importance. While a student’s satisfaction with his or her learning may give some indication of student learning, additional research would be needed to demonstrate the successful acquisition of integration-based skills and techniques in students.
Additionally, this study’s sample comes from just one university out of many potential Christian institutions, so the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other institutions or groups of students. A discussion of the particular style of integration espoused by the target school, Liberty University, is provided in Chapter Two. The study, practice, and conceptualization of integration may vary depending on denominational background, physical location, or other factors. Most importantly, this study specifically addresses student satisfaction and importance measures related to integration instruction. It is likely that the way integration is taught at this particular institution is unique to the institution but similar amongst faculty as faculty members work together, have the same leadership, and work in the same spiritual atmosphere.

Having asked participants to rate “satisfaction” in certain areas is a limiting factor of this study as well. “Satisfaction” is subjective and may vary depending on a student’s expectations. For example, low satisfaction with an ITP could mean more than one thing. A low rating could mean that students observed and appreciated a particular ITP but were not satisfied with its frequency of use in the program, but it could also mean that students saw an ITP used frequently but did not find that ITP helpful. The use of the “Importance” rating on each ITP is included to address this issue to some degree, as this measure can be examined in conjunction with a student’s Satisfaction rating to see which areas have the greatest disparity.

The term “satisfaction” may be viewed by some as a bimodal rather than interval variable by some participants despite the use of a 7-point Likert scale in the survey. That is, a participant may feel either satisfied or not satisfied in some areas and that the use of “very satisfied” or “very dissatisfied” are not applicable. This could be thought of in terms of a consumer’s understanding; if a consumer expects to purchase a hamburger that is cooked medium well, it
may be that their burger cooked medium well, as expected, would not lead them to describe themselves as “very satisfied,” but simply “just” satisfied. In this case, the consumer had an expectation that was met. In that particular area (how the hamburger was cooked), there may not have been anything that could have been done to inspire a result of “very satisfied.” Likewise, there may be some ITP areas where a ceiling effect is observed. In such an area, a student’s choice of “satisfied” versus “very satisfied” may not indicate that anything is “wrong” with this ITP area. Nevertheless, valuable information and resultant applications can still be derived from the observing measures of satisfaction, importance, and their relationship.

As the survey assessed student satisfaction, it could have been vulnerable to participants’ mood states. Variations in mood could cause students to feel more or less satisfied with aspects of their program. This effect may be extended to other temporary factors, such as a current student’s receipt of feedback on an assignment.

As online education is a relatively new teaching modality and little has been done in this area to explore how integration takes place in general, there is the possibility that initial qualitative study of integration in online education in general and in the area of counseling could suggest a different direction for quantitative research. However, the present study is based on a solid foundation through the convergence of multiple pieces of research, including integration teaching theory, research on student perceptions on integration, and general adult learning theory.

**Social Relevance and a Christian Worldview**

While a Christian counselor may be permitted from engaging in faith-based techniques or sharing scripture verses in certain counseling settings, the person of the counselor is always an
important factor in counseling. For a Christian engaging in counseling practice, it is essential that the spiritual implications of action or inaction are understood. A quality Christian counseling program should strive to prepare students to practice ethical and effective counseling, both in general and as a Christian practitioner. A variety of theories related to the integration of counseling and Christianity exist (Adams, 1979; Coe & Hall, 2010; Johnson, 2014; McMinn & Campbell, 2007; Powlison, 2005; Tan, 2011), but few have explored the way integration itself is actually taught (Garzon & Hall, 2012). In gaining a greater understanding of this, educators are more likely to provide quality education to students. This may mean understanding how to best provide strong and formative student-professor interactions within the online classroom. Additionally, this study may help to demonstrate how educators can best leverage the online environment in teaching integration.

Furthermore, there are clear areas of ethical concern in integration. Christian counseling educators must take care to instill sound judgment and informed practices related to integration for their students in order to protect clients, counselors, and the field of Christian counseling itself. Students may be less doctrinally sound today than in previous generations (Barna, 2005), so there is a need for Christian educators to also instill strong biblical foundations throughout academic disciplines well.

**Definitions**

**Integration**

While more broadly defined in some other contexts, for the purposes of this study integration can be defined as how Christian principles, values, practices, and worldview perspectives are brought into the theory and practice of counseling.
Integrative Teaching Practices

Integrative Teaching Practices (ITPs) are any activities taking place between students and the curriculum, professor, learning environment, or combination of these things that are designed to lead to the learning of integration.

Faith

Faith is defined for the present study as the belief in basic Christian doctrine such as the Holy Trinity, the resurrection of Christ, and the inerrancy of scripture.

Attachment

Attachment refers to the connection between two individuals wherein one serves as a base for security, comfort, and exploration for the other (Bowlby, 1969). Attachment relationships can have an effect on developmental processes and may be either beneficial or harmful, contributing to a relational style that may be applied to other relationships and schemas.

Adult Attachment

This term refers to connections between adult individuals that reflect the same principles of security, comfort, and exploration between an attachment figure and the developing individual. Specific to this study, professors are considered attachment figures, while students are the developing individuals.

Integration of Faith and Learning (IFL)

The integration of faith and learning refers to the study of academic material through the lens of one’s Christian worldview and understanding. As Christian worldview can vary from person to person, so too can one’s understanding and practice of IFL vary.
Student-Professor Interactions

Student-professor interaction includes any verbal, non-verbal, or written communication that takes place between the student and professor. Written grading feedback and assignment instructions are also included in this.

Online Education

Online counseling programs are primarily delivered through the Internet through learning management software (LMS) such as Blackboard. Programs typically have some type of face-to-face training and interaction as a part of degree requirements.

Face-to-Face Instruction (FTF)

For the purposes of this work, face-to-face studies or interactions refer to coursework consisting of regular on-campus classroom meetings with the potential for physical student-professor contact and interaction. Of note, face-to-face interaction can take place in an “online program,” as is the case with the program of study for the participants in this study.

Intensive Course

The term “intensive” refers to a particularly formatted course at the target institution in which students are enrolled for an entire semester, but also spend five consecutive days on campus during the course. These courses provide in-person lectures from a professor as well as time allotted for the practice of clinical skills.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the existing literature in IFL in counseling and related programs. The lack of research related to student perspectives on IFL was highlighted, particularly in the context of online education. A brief background of the measures used for the
study were covered. The purpose of the study was explicated, and the research questions were presented alongside brief discussion paragraphs for each. Finally, the assumptions and limitations, the general and Christian-specific social relevance, and key terms were listed and defined.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The topic of integration of faith and learning is extremely broad in nature, and applies not just to counseling and psychology, but to all academic disciplines at every level as well. To maintain the proper focus the following literature review will focus on integration as it relates to the field of counselor education specifically, including the development of current conceptualizations of integration in counselor education and research related to ITPs utilized by faculty. As psychology and social work are closely related to counseling, research on IFL in these fields will also be included when pertinent. A history of integration itself will not be covered, as other authors have already provided that (Adrian, 2003; Badley, 1994; Estep, 1998).

Chapter Organization

The chapter begins with a brief discussion of models of integration in counseling, followed by an explication of the model espoused by the target school. Next, an overview of Randall Sorenson’s lone theory on integration learning is provided. A review of residentially-based literature in the area of integrative teaching and learning follows, first with an overview of literature related to faculty perspectives and then a review of works on student perspectives. Next, the little that exists on faculty ideas pertaining to online IFL is explored, followed by a discussion of the lack of research based on student views of learning integration online. A review of applicable articles on online andragogy is offered, with particular attention given to the possible applications of the current research to IFL in a web-based learning environment.
Finally, some of the salient differences and similarities between online and residential education are considered.

**Models of Integration in Counseling**

Many models for the integration of faith and counseling have been proposed and cover a range of perspectives on how, as well as if it should be done (Adams, 1979; Coe & Hall, 2010; Johnson, 2014; McMinn & Campbell, 2007; Powlison, 2005; Tan, 2011). In fact, Eck (1996) has identified and analyzed 27 different integration models. Authors such as Entwistle (2015), Crabb (1977), and Johnson (2010), have provided categorizations to apply to these models as each represents a unique perspective, particularly in how integration should view the roles of scientific information and the faith-based information containing both biblical and spiritual knowledge. For example, while some advocate for a biblically-based approach that regards scientific research and practice as dangerous (Adams, 1979), others hold to views that see two separate “sides” that may rank the importance of these sides, or as two artificially separated portions of a whole (Crabb, 1977). Ultimately, however, each conceptualization of integration is an attempt to make sense of the same thing; how the Christian faith and science-based counseling practices should best be regarded and utilized. Still, as models of integration certainly vary, it is important to clarify the type of integration that the target school espouses, as this will affect the practices and expectations of both students and faculty.

**Target School Model**

The present study will draw its participants from a school that describes itself as distinctly Christian and committed to academic and scholarly excellence. Specific to the
counseling field, the school believes in clinical excellence and ethical practice. Students are prepared to be licensed practitioners that meet the standards of practice expected from state licensure boards and professional organizations. The school’s efforts for integration mean that students are taught how to ethically apply their faith to the practice of counseling. Empirical research is regarded as part of “general revelation” and is accepted as a portion of God’s truth unless it is directly opposed to scriptural principles or claims. This approach is not a nouthetic or Bible-only approach, nor is it a secular approach that disregards the importance of biblical and Christian spiritual principles. The approach might be closest to Eric Johnson’s (2011) “Maximal Integration.” Maximal Integration is motivated by the desire to reflect God’s image and to become closer to him through the exploration and examination of his world (Johnson, 2011). This includes aspects of an individual’s personal life (“individual maximal integration”), wherein internal conflicts between sin nature and God’s ways are overcome, relationships (“communal maximal integration”) involving interpersonal care and community development, conceptual knowledge (“maximal conceptual integration”) including an exploration of the world through the “lens” of scripture, and “maximal integrative expression,” the expression and sharing of godly concepts. This framework represents a general model for integration without being specific to a particular Christian denomination or psychological theory.

Johnson’s (2011) model reflects the target school’s relationship with traditional psychological practice and research in that unless a “secular” approach differs significantly from or opposes a scriptural view, it is utilized and incorporated. As in Maximal Integration (Johnson, 2011), the approach of the target school views the Bible as a beginning point; a text that takes precedence and primacy over other texts, as it represents a “fixed, divinely-inspired interpretation of reality” (p. 350). Students at the target school are encouraged to join the
American Counselor Association (ACA) and are required to read its ethical codes. In addition, students are required to read the American Association of Christian Counselor’s (AACC) ethical codes, and are also encouraged to join this organization as well. The character traits and integrity of faculty members and students alike are valued. Theologically, the target university is recognized as Baptist but accepts students from all denominations, not to mention other faiths. The program is designed to meet state counseling licensure standards, and one residential program was recently accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), a secular standard for counseling programs.

The school trains students to understand their Christian belief system and how this system of belief can be incorporated into ethical practice. This includes counseling those with different belief systems and understanding how to avoid imposing counselor-held values onto clients. In addition to specific courses on integrating counseling and Christianity, Christian elements are integrated throughout the coursework, often times in many of the ways described in the sections to follow. It is possible that Randall Sorenson’s model of integration learning may apply well to the target school, even in an online environment. The following section is an overview of Randall Sorenson’s theory of how the learning of integration might take place.

**Integration of Faith and Learning Theory**

While theories of integration itself abound, Randall Sorenson (1994, 1997) has provided the only available theory as to how students learn integration. Sorenson’s work is based off of attachment theory (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1988; Parkes, Stevenson-Hinde, & Marris, 1993), which purports that the quality of primary caregiver relationships directly affects a person’s emotional health throughout the lifespan (Garzon & Hall, 2012).
Sorenson believed that a relationship with a professor was a mediating pathway for effective integration; that integration was best taught in the context of a “secure base” relationship between the teacher and the learner (Sorenson et al., 2004). Surveying a sample of clinical psychology doctoral students, Sorenson found three dimensions of student perceptions of professors, two of which were significantly correlated with the student’s learning of integration ($p < .05$) (Sorenson, 1997). Sorenson’s work asserts that professors serve as attachment figures for their students, attachment figures that, according to attachment theory, encourage healthy development and independence. The presence of an attachment figure is not antithetical to maturity and growth, but serves a healthy and beneficial role, even into adulthood (Sorenson, 1997). Garzon and Hall (2012) point out that this model may be particularly salient in teaching psychology and counseling. They note that the subject matter, clinical supervision experiences, and mentoring through activities such as chairing a dissertation all provide opportunities for building relationships.

Sorenson’s (1994) first work toward discovering the importance in relationships in learning integration found that students’ relationships with their therapists were rated as more important in student integration development than professors. This was the first piece of evidence that helped to shape Sorenson’s theory that attachment relationships were crucial to integration learning. A later quantitative publication surveyed 48 doctoral students on their perceptions of 19 different professors (Sorenson, 1997). Three dimensions were revealed, two of which correlated with students’ learning of integration. The first dimension contained three variables: Evidence of Ongoing Process in a Personal Relationship with God, Emotional Transparency, and Sense of Humor, each related to emotional accessibility as well as vulnerability. Dimension one accounted for over half of the variance on how helpful and
exemplary a professor was in a student’s integration journey, which were pooled to form the outcome variable of “integration.” The second dimension described a professor as a “bulwark of faith” (where a faculty member is viewed as somewhat of a fixed reference point or role model) on one end of the continuum and a “fellow sojourner” (wherein the professor evidences openness to new thinking and differing points of view, inviting student involvement) on the other. This exploration showed that professor impact varied, and that certain professors might be better matched with specific students depending on their learning style. While some students might “attach” best to a professor who invites discourse and wrestling with difficult topics openly, others might better relate to a professor as a fixed and open example of a strong exemplar of the faith. Overall, students regarded a professor’s relationship with God as the most important dimension in what students found helpful integration (Sorenson, 1997). Interestingly, professor helpfulness was not correlated to their length of time in teaching, knowledge of the subject matter, or perceived theoretical orientation; the relational qualities were the best predictors of helpfulness in integration learning (Sorenson, 1997).

Sorenson’s work was replicated in a different setting, which yielded the same result; the research found evidence of a professor’s ongoing relationship with God was most important in determining faculty who were the most exemplary and helpful in integration (Staton et al., 1998). Further replication on yet another population yielded similar results, demonstrating an importance in student-professor relationship and evidence of a professor’s relationship to God as the highest correlated factor to integration learning (Sorenson et al., 2004). Professors were also found to be relatively poor in estimating how students view them in terms of their usefulness to students’ integration. The finding serves as further evidence of the importance to explore student perspectives on learning integration. While professors are familiar with an array of ITPs, this
research demonstrates that they may misevaluate what is actually the most helpful in practice. Thus, Sorenson’s theory and the resultant replication studies provide a good starting point for understanding the student side of IFL.

The following sections review the two sides of IFL, exploring what faculty and students think successful integration teaching and learning look like. To begin with, the research on faculty practices in a general (typically residential) context is explored, as faculty have primary control over what is done to teach students integration.

**Faculty and Integration**

Despite the abundance of theoretical perspectives on the integration of faith and learning there is an obvious consensus within the literature that the term “integration” remains difficult to define (Badley, 1994, 2009; Bailey, 2012; Burton & Nwosu, 2003; Devers, 2013; Dobmeier & Reiner, 2012; Dominguez et al., 2009; Grace & Poelstra, 1995; Hodges, 1994; S. Jones, 2006; Miller, 2014; Reeder & Pacino, 2013). While ambiguity of the term itself exists, the concept has become familiar in academia; it is becoming an academic field in its own right and faculty are expected to engage in integration (Reeder & Pacino, 2013). Additionally, many educators have published writings that describe their use of ITPs in the classroom. The following section is a review of literature specifically focused on how faculty report implementing and understanding integration. Examples of both residentially based and online ITPs have been identified in the literature.

**General Faculty Perspectives**

While calls for further definition abound and theories of IFL vary even within the counseling field, there has been some headway in the literature in demonstrating what professors
do in order to teach integration in the helping professions. Ream and colleagues developed a typology of faculty views on the integration of faith and learning which included eight views total: faith and learning are separate and independent, 4 types of “limited integration” including, for example, integration into the campus environment but not in the curriculum, virtually unlimited, and complete integration (2004, pp. 355-367). The authors point out that only one of these perspectives demonstrates a belief that faith and learning should be completely separate. This perspective represented only 112 of the 1096 reviewed responses collected. Clearly, most faculty believe that some sort of integration of faith and learning should take place in the classroom.

Additionally, there is evidence that students from Christian schools are better equipped to handle spiritual issues in clinical practice within mental health (Eckel, 2009), which may indicate that the ITPs that professors currently employ are working in some way, at least in addressing practical integration issues. Joeckel and Chesnes (2010) found that the majority of faculty teaching at Christian universities reported either somewhat agreeing (27.1%) or strongly agreeing (67.6%) with the statement, “I have a good idea of what is meant by the phrase ‘the integration of faith and learning’” (p. 181). Additionally, the majority of this sample (n = 1867) agreed that it was “not difficult” to integrate faith and learning in their discipline. Professors, then, do appear to have a sense of how to incorporate ITPs into their work, at least by their own definition.

Many faculty are able to identify specific ways they integrate in the classroom. These perspectives are not limited to courses specifically focusing on integration (such as Liberty University’s “Integration of Spirituality and Counseling” course). Many programs of study contain similar courses dedicated to the subject of integration, however, the content of these
courses varies widely, suggesting a lack of clear guidelines in their development (Stevenson & Young, 1995; Tisdale et al., 2013). Garzon, Hall, and Ripley (2014) note that this demonstrates the importance of teaching integration throughout the curriculum, and the literature suggests that this is being done. Faculty members serving Christian-based programs report utilizing ITPs in courses such as counseling theories (Watson & Eveleigh, 2014), statistics (Poelstra, 2009; Ripley & Dwiwardani, 2014), supervision (Aten et al., 2007; Tan, 2009), assessment (Adams et al., 2014), developmental psychology (Cook & Leonard, 2014), ethics (Anderson, 2014), multicultural and diversity training (Eriksson & Abernethy, 2014), biopsychology (Struthers, 2014), and psychopathology (Butman & Yarhouse, 2014). Thus, ITPs are not limited to courses specifically designed to address integration; integrative teaching practices can exist throughout a program of study.

**General Integrative Teaching Practices**

Most of the literature reviewed focused on ITPs from a residential course delivery format. Still, although this research is not directly focused on online pedagogy, these methods help to demonstrate faculty perspectives in IFL as well as teaching methods that could potentially translate to online learning. Many of the articles make mention of in-class activities, but do not specifically attempt to address course delivery format, neither excluding nor including online education from the discussion. Thus, some of the following may be applicable to online education as well as residential education.

**Clinical skill.** Many educators point to strong clinical skill as a starting point in defining a well-integrated program (Adams et al., 2014; Flanagan et al., 2011; Graham-Howard & Scott, 2011; Johnson & Hathaway, 2004; Olson et al., 2011). Approaches to understanding “secular” therapy techniques certainly vary between integration models, but integrative academic programs
in the counseling and psychology area have the essential goal of sending students out into the workplace as equipped professionals. Thus, these students must become experts in their field and just as well educated and skilled as a student from a program that is not faith-based. If a student is to “integrate” he or she must have both required pieces to begin with.

In a 2011 special edition of *The Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, directors of clinical training in Christian doctoral psychology programs were asked to describe their program’s model of clinical training (McMinn & Hill, 2011). Notably, each of the educators specifically included their professional accreditation through the American Psychological Association in describing their model (Cimbora, 2011; Flanagan et al., 2011; Graham-Howard & Scott, 2011; Peterson, 2011; Scrofani & Nordling, 2011; Simpson, 2011). Thus, these authors identify accountability to the profession as a whole as part of integration.

Implicit in these articles is the belief that clinical skill is part of integration, not separate from it. Polestra (2009) suggests that good integration dismantles the false dichotomy between clinical excellence and a Christian worldview; no such division truly exists. Simpson (2011) points out that the Bible does not specifically address many practical issues in mental health. Just as the Bible is not an exhaustive medical textbook and a doctor, Christian or not, would be expected to know medical science, so too must Christian counselors be skilled in “secular” clinical skills. Being strong in integration means to be strong in one’s academic and clinical skill (Olson et al., 2011).

Additionally, many Christian programs view research as an integral part of integration. Glanzer takes the stance that integration includes “the creation and redemption of scholarship” (2008, p. 43). Research is described by some as being seated “at the heart of our mission” (Brown & Wagener, 2004, p. 325). Flanagan et al. (2011) agree that students must be both
clinically strong and wise consumers of empirical literature, and some describe their programs with a three-part identity model, a “Christian practitioner-scholar model” (Johnson & Hathaway, 2004; Scrofani & Nordling, 2011).

The focus on clinical excellence as a part of integration is general in nature, not necessarily bound to spiritual or Christian matters. However, authors do give examples of how to incorporate spiritual issues practically into clinical work. For example, students may be asked to work through practical clinical questions such as “How does intellectual disability affect spiritual maturity or spiritual value?” (Adams et al., 2014, p. 143). Students may also be better prepared to address spiritual concerns through training in spiritually-based intake procedures (Adams et al., 2014; Olson et al., 2011). The use of vignettes is also mentioned frequently in the literature (Anderson, 2014; Manfred-Gilham, 2009; Tan, 2009). For example, a vignette specifically targeting multicultural differences and appropriate referral may help students to learn traditional clinical skill while sharpening their competency in spiritual and cultural issues (Hagedorn & Gutierrez, 2009).

**Conceptual.** Integration also means expanding models of therapy to be better understood and applied by Christian practitioners. For example, Turns et al. (2013) found no research on sex therapy approaches specifically for Christians. In turn, they first explicated a Christian understanding of sex and then modeled a Christian approach after clinical methods already in existence. The result may not be much different in practice, but the exploration of worldview implications is meant to help students to better understand how their personal views interface with treatment.

Within the numerous models of integration for counseling and psychology part of integration appears to be explicating the various models in class conceptually. For example, a
professor may create assignments allowing students to wrestle through subjects such as biblical ethics and how to consider how those subjects interact with clinical practice (Graham-Howard & Scott, 2011). As in the use of vignettes, conceptually based competencies are meant to challenge student assumptions and stimulate the growth of their personal models, only at a more global level. An example of this is asking broad questions about topics such as the nature of the person (Scrofrani & Nordling, 2011). Critical thinking is encouraged in such practices, as students define sources of revelation, learn to verify facts, and apply models of integration to the discipline (Bailey, 2012). Specific readings on conceptual models of counseling can be assigned (Cook & Leonard, 2014), which can easily be accompanied by in-class discussion or assignments. Teaching about secular theories through a Christian worldview may be a part of this (Watson & Eveleigh, 2014), but this does not mean to edit or “water down” these theories. Again, by and large, educators in recent literature advocate for an unwavering and honest examination of scholarly sources. Cook and Leonard (2014) specifically warn against avoiding controversial subjects such as lesbian and gay parenting. They contend that students must explore such areas openly and wrestle with how they might interact with their worldviews.

Self-knowledge and personal formation. This exploration of theoretical sources from both Christian and secular sources overlaps with what Moon (1997) would call “personal integration,” as it is both conceptual and personal (Reichard, 2013). That is, educators see personal exploration and development as an integral part of integration (Conway et al., 2005; Farnsworth, 1982; Flanagan et al., 2011; Graham-Howard & Scott, 2011; Marshall, 2010; Ripley & Dwiwardani, 2014; Scrofani & Nordling, 2011; Trainor, 2006; Wolf, 2011). Counseling is not a valueless exercise; the counselor is expected to be aware of his or her own values (ACA, 2014, Standard A.4.b.). Certainly, understanding one’s values in counseling is a salient issue for
Christian professionals today, as the profession continues to struggle with ethical dilemmas specifically related to referrals and treatment of non-heterosexual clients by Christian counselors (Francis & Dugger, 2014). Trainor (2006) points out that comprehension, analysis, and judgment are required in academia, but not doctrinal assent. Certainly, an academic program of study is meant to inspire critical thinking and a “struggle” with one’s previously held assumptions, and it is apparent that many educators see this as a vital part of integration. Trainor’s comment is also true for counseling itself, where practitioners must hear and understand client value systems they may not agree with while still maintaining an ethical and helpful counseling relationship.

An understanding of basic theology is important in personal formation. A student’s beliefs are a part of their value system, so they may be challenged to understand their models of theology as a part of this (Cook & Leonard, 2014). Additionally, faculty suggest students should explore their overall worldview (Wolf, 2011), spiritual development (Tisdale et al., 2013), and character traits such as patience (Ripley & Dwiwardani, 2014). Questioning how a student might weigh their value of money versus helping the poor was offered as a practical example of an ITP in this area (Flanagan et al., 2011). Conway et al. (2005) believe that students should be directed to think about how their skills can be used to help others and to promote social justice. Farnsworth’s (1982) example includes the use of scripture, as he suggests students should be reminded of James 1:22, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (KJV). Exploration of one’s views of others can serve as a practical multicultural and spiritual exercise (Eriksson & Abernethy, 2014). Students may be encouraged to consider how they might see others as Christ sees them in the context of multicultural issues (Eriksson & Abernethy, 2014).
Ripley and Dwiwardani (2014) offer strategies for implementing character development activities that target specific virtues. For example, one such strategy is to foster the growth of care and compassion by asking students to write out prayer requests, share them with the class, and to pray for one another. Another example given by Ripley and Dwiwardani is periodically displaying a dragon on the presentation screen to remind students to have courage as they face their fear of statistics. Hagedorn and Gutierrez (2009) suggest the use of a “who am I” journal activities, as well as a group activities, wherein members are encouraged to find commonalities with one another as a personal development activity.

Notably, while the preceding writings suggesting faith development as a part of IFL do not use the language of attachment and do not articulate specific theoretical rationale for these interventions, the development of faith can be conceptualized in terms of attachment fairly easily. Students are developing their faith in an exploratory environment guided by the professor. Sorenson (1997) would likely point to the professor as a secure base attachment figure that fosters faith development in this context.

Modeling. Some describe integration as being “caught more than taught” (Sorenson, 1994, p. 342), and many educators view integration as occurring through professor modeling (Anderson, 2014; Aten et al., 2007; Cook & Leonard, 2014; Devers, 2013; Eriksson & Abernethy, 2014; Flanagan et al., 2011; Iselin & Meteyard, 2010; J. Jones, 2007; Mathisen, 2003; Matthias, 2008; Olson et al., 2011; Poelstra, 2009; Ripley & Dwiwardani, 2014; Sites et al., 2009; Sorenson, 1994; Tisdale et al., 2013; Watson & Eveleigh, 2014; Woods et al., 2012). At times, the concept of modeling is not as clearly defined as other areas of ITP. For example, Watson & Eveleigh (2014) identify modeling as important but provide little discussion as to what this means. However, taken in context of the preceding ITP areas listed, it may be inferred
that modeling involves a professor possessing and demonstrating self-knowledge, positive character traits such as humility, spiritual maturity, and excellence in scholarship and clinical knowledge. Faculty motivation and attitude may be more important in this area than the concepts they teach (Flanagan et al., 2011). Activities with students outside of the classroom allow for opportunities to foster the student-professor relationship (Poelstra, 2009). Even further divorced from the classroom setting, it is suggested that professors must be sure to develop their own spiritual walk as a part of modeling and maintaining positive relationships with students (Ripley & Dwiwardani, 2014).

Some authors are more explicit in defining what the concept of modeling in integration might entail. Matthias (2008) shared that faculty who were identified as exemplars to peers were commonly credited with being humble and open to change. Poelstra (2009) suggests that faculty members pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance for the class, which could be done in the presence of students. More practical still is Kelleher’s (2010) suggestion that professors push in chairs in the classroom after class is over, demonstrative an attitude of service. Regardless of particular suggestions, it is clear that many educators view the person of the professor as an important part of integration.

**Relationship.** Directly related to professor modeling is the student-professor relationship. As described in the theoretical perspectives section of this review, Sorenson (1997), proposed a model of student learning in integration that relies heavily on the student-professor relationship. Cook and Leonard (2014) provide some well-defined theoretically-based ITPs. Some of these may be utilized by faculty members and have even been mentioned in literature, but not necessarily alongside a theoretical explanation for their use. For example, Cook and Leonard note the use of allowing students to discuss difficult questions in class, within
the context of safety and with the professor providing somewhat of a “secure base” to guide the discussion when needed.

Conclusion

In reviewing the literature on ITPs, several main focus areas can be identified, including clinical skill, practical knowledge, conceptual knowledge, character development, and spiritual maturity. It may be important to point out that many of these areas appear to overlap one another. Developing clinical skill and practical knowledge are likely to go hand-in-hand with favorable character traits such as humility (i.e., students willing to learn and be directed by professors), and integrity (i.e., serving clients to the best of one’s ability despite possible sacrifices). Challenging one’s belief system requires self-knowledge and intellectual competence; it is both a matter of the head and a matter of the heart (Reichard, 2013). These overlapping areas may explain why some educators have had difficulty in explaining what integration actually “looks like” practically. Still, as demonstrated above, when prompted educators are able to identify specific ITPs in their work.

Professors in Christian counseling are in control of how integration is taught, and they are generally able to explain their ideas about integration and even specific ITPs. However, they represent only one side of the equation. Differences in what students and faculty see as important in these areas could mean issues in student retention and satisfaction (Morris et al., 2003; Schreiner, 2000). On the other hand, a “match” between student and faculty values would be helpful for students. Student satisfaction with integration and a sense of spiritual “fit” on a campus is a strong predictor of retention at Christian schools (Morris et al., 2003; Schreiner, 2000; Walter, 2000). Student ideas about how integration is best learned are tremendously
important. The following section summarizes the literature on students’ thoughts on learning integration.

**Students and Integration**

Faculty perspectives on integration are clearly important. Faculty members are responsible for delivering curriculum, providing content, giving feedback, and setting a classroom environment. However, while literature on faculty perspectives is certainly worthwhile, little has been published exploring students’ perceptions of integration and their satisfaction with integration in their program of study. Calls for additional research related to student perceptions on integration have existed for years (Holmes, 1994), but a search of the literature reveals little produced on this particular aspect of the topic in the past 20 years.

Among the research that has been done, some authors have sought to further explore student perspectives in integration by building upon Sorenson’s theory and the resultant replication studies. Burton and Nwosu (2003) surveyed both graduate and undergraduate students seeking elementary licensure certification in a Christian program. The researchers sought to gain an understanding of how students defined integration. They found that student responses fit into six categories labeled learning processes, making connections, parallel processing, atmosphere, faith application, and foundational. Respondents (n = 44) unanimously agreed that integration was taking place in their course and were able to provide specific examples of what they considered faith-learning integration in their class. The researchers placed these examples into the five categories including teaching and learning activities, classroom climate, worship, collaboration, and resources. Students also identified which examples of integration were most important to them. Responses favored in-class activities and
interactions with the professor both in and outside of the classroom. This study provides rich information on student perspectives, but its results are further evidence of a need to explore online learning. Burton and Nwosu specifically note that students appeared to be concerned with not just content itself, but how that content was delivered. While content can remain relatively constant between online and residential teaching modalities, the difference made by delivery format remains untested in this area.

Furthering the research on the student side, Lawrence et al. (2005), surveyed 77 students with open-ended questions related to integration. Not all students agreed that integration had taken place, yet all identified integrative moments in teaching. When students were asked where integration in the classroom was attributed (to the student or the teacher), the largest group of students indicated that integration was something that the professor did. Student descriptions of integration mirrored Burton and Nwosu’s (2003) five categories, with the greatest number of responses falling into the “Learning Processes” category. This study was helpful in providing additional support to some of Burton and Nwosu’s findings, but provided a relatively narrow focus as the same professor taught every student involved in the study.

In a more extensive study, Hall et al. (2009) collected results from 595 students from four Evangelical Christian institutions. The researchers’ aim was to explore the ways that students conceptualize and learn integration. This portion of a two-part study was qualitative in nature, and the open-ended questions allowed students to provide examples about what they found specifically helpful professor behaviors and qualities. Two main themes emerged in the analysis: Facilitating Integration (specific traits or practices students found “helpful” in the professor, curriculum, or spiritual environment), and Concepts of Integration (an understanding of what “exemplary” integration actually is). Five professor traits were identified as important for
teaching integration, including faculty members presenting as self-revealing (which related to Sorenson’s Evidence of an On-Going Relationship with God), caring, welcoming, dedicated, and open-minded. Again, Sorenson’s attachment model appeared to be supported by the findings. Although the researchers did not find some specific categories previously identified by Sorenson (1997) in this piece (Sense of Humor and Openness to New Thinking), they point out that the methodologies of the two studies may have elicited different foci in student responses.

In the corresponding study to the piece described above, Ripley et al. (2009) explored student perceptions of integration quantitatively. Three factors were expected: “University environment attachment, attachment to faculty as sojourners/bulwarks of the faith, and attachment to faculty as emotionally transparent” (Ripley, 2009, p. 8). The research supported these factors, and an item endorsing the concept of faculty’s ongoing process of personal relationship with God was rated as the second highest item, just under “faculty’s firm commitment to their faith” (Ripley, 2009, p. 9). Gender differences were revealed in the study, with women scoring environmental factors higher than men. Additionally, African-American respondents rated environmental factors more highly than Caucasians, although there were few African-American respondents represented. The research backed the importance of professor-related variables in integration while adding a unique feature in its consideration of environment. The importance of learning environment is important to the study of integration in online learning, as online course delivery has some obvious differences from traditional residential studies. The work of Ripley and colleagues as well as Hall and colleagues (2009) led to further unpublished work by Garzon (2013, 2015) in the development of a student perception survey. This is further discussed in Chapter Three.
A more recent sample of students in Christian doctoral psychology programs was also surveyed for perceptions on integration (McMinn et al., 2011). The study focused mostly on overall satisfaction in Christian schools rather than the distinct concept of integration, but a specific item did measure satisfaction with “learning how to integrate.” The item mean response score for the item was 3.8 on a 5-point Likert scale. The mean student score across the 20 measured satisfaction items measured in this study was 3.6 (SD = 0.6). While student perceptions on what actually makes up integration were not explored, this study showed that the students were relatively satisfied with what they learned in the area.

Although it was not related to counseling and psychology specifically, a study by Sherr, Huff, and Curran (2007) explored student perceptions on integration and provided useful information. It found that faculty relationships with God were perceived as an important aspect of integration, supporting Sorenson’s theory. The second factor that emerged in this study was faculty competence, including specific coverage of integrative topics in the curriculum. An earlier study by the same researchers found similar themes in a population of social work students (Sherr, Huff, & Curran, 2006).

Much of what faculty suggest as important in teaching IFL as well as the limited amount of research on student perceptions often support Sorenson’s idea that an attachment relationship between the professor and student serves as a mediating pathway to integration learning. However, the research on IFL in counseling reviewed in this chapter has not yet focused specifically on an online learning environment. The following sections include a review of the few works addressing online learning of integration.
Online-Specific Integrative Teaching Practices

An understanding of what counselor educators do to integrate provides an important but limited view of integration in the classroom. Student perspectives on integration in the classroom have been given less attention, and as online education continues to grow there is a clear need to examine how ITPs are carried out in the online environment (Dominguez et al., 2009; Garzon & Hall, 2012). Although the faculty teaching practices described above were based on residential teaching sections, most of them are easily applied to an online learning environment. Any assignments primarily based on a writing component are easily delivered online. Writing exercises have been identified in various areas of integration described above, such as self-awareness and character development (Hagedorn & Gutierrez, 2009), clinical skill (Manfred-Gilham, 2009), spiritually-based practical situations in counseling (Anderson, 2014), and developing a personal conceptual model of integration (Olson et al., 2011). Such assignments are not typically written in a face-to-face classroom environment anyway, and are often delivered electronically through email or an online learning management system for resident courses. Assigned readings can also be the same in both residential and online environments.

Of course, there are differences in these two learning environments. Lectures delivered online may be asynchronous and less interactive, and classroom discussion may follow suit. Interactions and environment, as opposed to the curriculum itself, are the greatest areas of difference. Fortunately, in recent years more attention is being given specifically to ITPs in the online learning environment.

Few sources were found in searching for information on ITPs in the online learning environment, but one source, *Best Practices in the Integration of Faith and Learning for Adult*
and Online Learners, edited by Fleming and Tweedell (2010), offered contributions on the topic from multiple online educators. Again, some techniques described are very much the same as what might be utilized residentially. Wilkinson and Chamberlain (2010), for example, believe that students’ assumptions must be challenged and formed through integrative education, much like Trainor’s (2006) suggestions. This can certainly be done either in an online environment or residentially through various means.

Some authors’ teaching strategies are clearly specific to the online environment. In one of the text’s chapters, Mary Quinn (2010) suggests that connection is extremely important to online students. She believes that utilizing various forms of communication such as group discussion boards and phone conversations help bolster that sense of community and belonging (Quinn, 2010). It is important to bear in mind that Quinn was referring not just to successful teaching, but successful integration with this suggestion. Quinn, like others, sees connection and personal involvement of the students as an integral part of integration. Anderson and Janzen (2010) offer their own suggestions for fostering connection, including a recorded video message from the Dean of their school to the students. Adobe Connect (a video conferencing software) is suggested for holding devotional times and to create instructional videos. The authors also offer the example of a podcast presentation of the professor’s faith story and discussion prompts specifically designed to foster empathy and authenticity among the student body.

Quinn et al. (2012) believe that a specific focus on fostering connection in online courses reflects a biblical worldview. They suggest that secular universities are individualistic and self-centered, and that online Christian schools should stand in contrast to that. Online educators also give attention to the faculty-student relationship in education. A major factor in the effectiveness of online education is the ability of the instructor to build trust and encourage students (Rieg,
2010). Kelleher (2010) agrees that instructors serve not only as those who aid in delivering information, but they should be examples of faithful Christians, what he calls “Living Curriculum.”

Relatively little exists that relates to learning integration in an online environment, but it is a positive sign that this area is being given more attention. Research on student views of integration learning in an online environment was also sought out. This is discussed in the following section.

Online Student Perspectives in IFL

Of the relatively few studies that have focused on student perceptions of IFL, none could be found that addressed online learner perspectives in IFL. Searches were conducted using EBSCO’s Quick Search, which includes databases such as Academic Search Complete, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, ProQuest, and PsychInfo. Google Scholar was also utilized. Search terms included “Christian,” “integration,” “integration of faith and learning,” “online,” “online learning,” and “student perspectives,” and were searched for in various combinations. In addition, Google Scholar allows users to select “cited by” for particular articles. This feature was used with key articles such as Badley’s (1994) works to look for articles pertaining to an online learning environment. Despite the growing number of students engaged in online learning, this appears to be an unexplored area in the literature. This present study hopes to build from Sorenson’s theory and Garzon’s survey research while considering some of the unique features of online education. Below, these differences are considered through the lens of available research.
Differences Between Online and Resident Learning and Learners

Online counselor education programs are increasing (Reicherzer et al., 2009), reflecting on overall trend of students seeking out online means of education (Allen & Seaman, 2011). It is important to note that the literature has identified unique qualities in online learners that may play a role in how they view and participate in integration in their studies. For example, online learners have been found to be more motivated and self-directed (Berenson, Boyles, & Weaver, 2008). Online learners also view their professors differently, seeing them more as facilitators and guides rather than directive leaders (Cercone, 2008). It is reasonable to question whether or not this could have an effect on how students view the locus of integration. Whereas residential students have seen integration as something that the professor does (Lawrence et al., 2005), perhaps online students would view this differently, as they view their studies as a whole in a different way. These differences are likely important in the study of integration, as a student’s perspective of faculty helpfulness in learning integration can vary widely depending on a student’s learning style (Sorenson, 1997; Sorenson et al., 2004).

Thus, systematic differences between the “learner profile” on an online student versus a traditional residential student could have implications for the teaching and learning of integration online. Research is clear that professor-student interaction matters in student satisfaction; greater online instruction has been correlated with higher learner satisfaction and course grade (Abdous & Yen, 2010). Additionally, while online students have identified a lack of face-to-face instructor interaction as an unattractive feature of online learning (Diaz & Entonado, 2009; Donavant, 2009; Yang & Cornelious, 2005), there are various ways that professors can use technology to engage students individually and personally, such as through the use of social
media and asynchronous ongoing discussions that are not available in a strictly traditional learning environment (Major, 2010; Revere & Kovach, 2011).

In fact, some researchers have pointed out specific benefits of online learning over traditional methods beyond flexibility for the learner, even suggesting that there may be a higher degree of interaction in online learning (Abrami, Bernard, Bures, Borokhovski, & Tamim, 2010; Archambault, Wetzel, Fouger, & Williams, 2010; Boling, Hough, Krinsky, Saleem, & Stevens, 2012; Falloon, 2011). Some also believe that the chance for collaboration and community is greater in online learning, allowing for a more free exchange of ideas and information (Barrett, Higa, & Ellis, 2012; Dykman & Davis, 2008; Racović-Marković, 2010; Sharples, Taylor, & Vavoula, 2007), as well as a higher quality and greater number of relationships (Bradley, 2009; Deil-Amenn, 2011; O’Bannon & McFadden, 2008; Ryan, Connolly, Grummell, & Finnegan, 2009; Sharples et al., 2007; Taran, 2006), in part because of the immediate and individualized feedback between both students and professors and between fellow students that an online learning environment provides (Archambault et al., 2010; Boling et al., 2012; Er, Ozden, & Arifoglu, 2009; Hoic-Bozic, Mornar, & Boticki, 2009; Russ, Mitchell, & Durham, 2010).

Online learning allows greater flexibility in adapting to different student learning styles (Diaz & Entonado, 2009) and protects against biases against students (Major, 2010).

These differences in online and residential learners include both perceived advantages and disadvantages in many areas, including relational areas that may be most applicable to Sorenson’s model and student perceptions. This review of the literature explicating these differences reveals a complex picture; it cannot be assumed that one environment is “less conducive” to IFL, or even to mentoring practices. The present study will provide some insight to how students view integration in this altered environment.
Chapter Summary

Research on student perceptions of integration has seen a slight increase in recent years but remains a relatively unexplored space in the literature. As both Christian and online universities continue to grow, the need to develop a model of student understanding is more necessary. Randall Sorenson has provided the only theoretical model for how students learn integration. This work included explorations of student opinions and experiences and reflected the importance of relational factors between students and professors in IFL. Others have worked to add to Sorenson’s model, but none have offered competing perspectives. Despite a lack of theoretical underpinnings, faculty have offered suggestions for integration in classrooms and express an overall comfort in integrating in the classroom. A small subset of these faculty have provided specific suggestions for ITPs online, but there appears to be no research on student conceptualizations of integration in an online environment. Exploration of online student perspectives of IFL is needed. This exploration may provide further evaluation of Sorenson’s model in a general sense as well as its implications for online learning specifically, particularly in light of the differences between online and residential learning.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

This exploratory, cross-sectional survey study was carried out to investigate online counseling student values in integration; that is, what elements involved in learning the integration of counseling and Christian principles were viewed as most important. The cross-sectional design is appropriate and useful in studies such as this, which explore and describe participants’ beliefs and values (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, this work sought to identify any unique differences in students’ preferred features of IFL and student satisfaction with these features in an online environment. Additionally, the level of importance students place on the factors was compared with student satisfaction in each area. This study collected data for the purpose of producing descriptive statistics for a sample of online students in a graduate counseling program in a private Christian liberal arts college. The data collected will be used to inform the development of ITPs in the program.

Chapter Organization

This chapter presents the research questions for the study as well as hypotheses for each of them. General characteristics of the participants are presented. The instrumentation utilized for this study, including its historical development through the work of other researchers and finally, its modifications for the current study is also covered. The study procedures, data analyses, and ethical considerations are also covered.
Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question One:

What factors of integrative teaching practices (ITPs) values emerge as reliable constructs for a population of online graduate counseling students?

Null Hypothesis: No discernable ITP factor structure will emerge containing reliable constructs for a population of online graduate counseling students.

Alternative Hypothesis: Credible Integration and Mentoring will emerge as reliable constructs for a population of online graduate counseling students.

Research Question Two:

Which ITP factors emerge as most important to online graduate counseling students?

Null Hypothesis: There are no specific factors of integrative teaching practices that online graduate counseling students value most.

Alternative Hypothesis: Graduate counseling students will value Credible Integration more than Mentoring.

Research Question Three:

Are online counseling students satisfied with their school’s performance in the identified ITP factors?

Null Hypothesis: Participants’ average rating of the ITP factors will not exceed a four on a 7-point Likert scale.
Alternative Hypothesis: Participants’ average rating of the ITP factors will exceed a four on a 7-point Likert scale.

**Research Question Four:**

Is there a disparity between students’ ratings of importance and level of satisfaction of the ITP factors in their program?

Null Hypothesis: There will be no relationship between students’ value and satisfaction of the ITP factors in their program.

Alternative Hypothesis: Low disparity between students’ ratings of value and perceived presence of ITP areas in their program will be observed.

**Participants**

The participants for this study are comprised of individuals from a population of students currently enrolled in a hybrid master’s level, licensure-seeking counselor program at a private Christian university. These students have chosen to study at a university known for its foundation on and training in Christian principles throughout its disciplines of study and are therefore more likely than students in a secular school to be interested in the integration of Christianity and counseling. While these participants may vary in some ways from students at other Christian universities, they are thought to have similar essential qualities to other students studying in a Christian-based counseling program. The sample was comprised of adult individuals of varying age, ethnicity, and religious background. Additionally, the geographical location of these participants also varies, as students may complete the online program anywhere that has an Internet connection.
Measures

The present study utilized one instrument in the form of an online survey. Participants were provided an informed consent page upon initial access to an online survey based on previous work of Garzon (2013, 2015). This page summarized the potential risks and benefits of participation in the survey, the voluntary nature of study participation, background information for the study, confidentiality, procedures, a statement of consent, and contact information for the author and the Liberty University Institutional Review Board for student questions or concerns. Students were required to click a button indicating agreement to participate in the study prior to the survey questions being displayed. Basic demographic information was collected as a part of this survey, as well a modified version of Garzon’s (2007, 2009, 2013, 2015) survey on student integration satisfaction. Garzon’s (2007, 2009, 2013, 2015) survey was adapted from his previous work with residential students for use with an online counseling student population.

Garzon’s Student Integration Survey Development

In an unpublished study, Garzon (2007) administered an early version of the survey to a large sample of undergraduate students and gathered over 3900 responses. Respondents from religion-related majors were screened out, as it was assumed that their views of integration could significantly skew the results. 3421 responses were retained. In this sample, students rated items related to faculty spirituality more highly than aspects of course content.

The results from the 2007 survey were used to inform another administration of a revised survey in 2009 ($N = 782$). This survey randomized items and item wording was standardized, as previous iterations had items grouped and worded in such a way that could have influenced the factor analysis. The factor analysis performed on the 2009 data reduced 53 items to 14 based on
factor loadings of .5 or greater. The factors that emerged included Applied Integration (3 items, $\alpha = .859$), Professor Attitudes (4 items, $\alpha = .732$), Spiritual Atmosphere (3 items, $\alpha = .704$), and Professor Openness and Time (4 items, $\alpha = .775$).

This measure was further developed through a quantitative item-analysis methodology using factor analysis (Ripley et al., 2009) in an attempt to replicate Sorenson’s (1997) past research, in which evidence of a professor’s relationship with God was found most helpful in integrating psychology and faith. The study had a total of 595 participants gathered from four different Christian universities and from various programs. In addition to Sorenson’s previously studied factors of “faculty as sojourner” and “emotional transparency” additional questions thought to relate to the spiritual atmosphere of the learning environment were added. A 30-item 5-point Likert-based measure was developed based on the three areas and reviewed by experts in integration. The points on the Likert scale were designated as: not important, a little important, important, extremely important, and absolutely necessary.

The researchers utilized a maximum likelihood principal components analysis with varimax rotation. While eigenvalues of at least one indicated seven factors, the scree plot indicated three of four factors. The researchers forced the model into a three-factor solution, which explained 49.64% of the variance. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was above a .5 (KMO = .86) and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant (Bartlett Chi Square $(253) = 2532; p < .001$). The researchers required a factor loading of greater than .40 and a difference with other factors at least .20 for items to be retained. Of the 30 items, 28 loaded onto 3 factors with two items thrown out.

Simultaneous to Ripley and colleague’s (2009) work, Hall et al. (2009) conducted companion qualitative research on the same population of students ($N = 595$). Participants were
asked to respond to the following open-ended questions: “In my experience, the best example of integration I have seen was (describe what you saw)”; “What do you most appreciate about the way integration is done in your school?”; and “What would you like to see improved about the way integration is done in your school?” (Hall et al., 2009, p. 16). The results underwent post-hoc grounded theory content analysis. The researchers utilized open, axial, and finally selective coding strategies, which indicated two central codes termed Facilitating Integration and Concepts of Integration when data saturation was reached. Within-method data triangulation, the grounding of theoretical statements to data, and the emergence of theoretical saturation were cited as indicators of quality in the analysis.

The 14 retained items from the 2009 version were again administered by Garzon as a part of the target University’s Assessment Day in 2013 (N = 644). Again, those students in religion-based programs were removed, which left an N of 483 for modeling. A confirmatory factor analysis was performed for the same 4 factors that were revealed in the previous survey: Applied Integration (3 items, \( \alpha = .880 \)), Professor Attitudes (4 items, \( \alpha = .652 \)), Spiritual Atmosphere (3 items, \( \alpha = .847 \)), and Professor Openness and Time (4 items, \( \alpha = .832 \)).

Most recently, another version of the survey containing 21 items was administered for University Assessment day to both students (N = 1792), and university faculty (N = 252) (Garzon, 2015). In this iteration of the survey, a second Likert rating was be added to each of the items in which participants are asked to rate their satisfaction with their program’s performance in the given area in addition to a Likert rating of each item’s importance to the participant. For example, respondents were asked to give a Likert-based response regarding the importance of “Comparing a biblical truth with a corresponding truth from my discipline” and were
subsequently asked to give a Likert-based response on how satisfied they were with their program’s performance in this area.

Additionally, this latest analysis of the survey yielded two dimensions after a confirmatory factor analysis was performed: Credible Integration, including items such as “professors displaying godly character” “Applying biblical principles to ‘real life’ situations that can occur in the jobs related to the academic discipline I study” (7 items, Importance $\alpha = .885$; Satisfaction $\alpha = .864$) and Mentoring (including items such as “professors spending time with students outside the classroom” (8 items, Importance $\alpha = .831$; Satisfaction $\alpha = .832$). Six items had no classification.

**Survey Development and Modification for Online Learners**

The items in Garzon’s versions of the survey were reviewed for their applicability to the online learning environment by the researcher. Two items were obviously more applicable to a residential environment (“Professors opening their homes to students” and “Participating in community service projects that have active professor involvement”), and were therefore discarded from the current survey. Additionally, some of the questions that implied or contained elements of in-person interaction were retained and reworded. “Professors spending time with students outside the classroom” became “Professors spending time interacting online with students in matters unrelated to course content but important to the students.” Next, “Professors sharing a devotional thought that connects meaningfully to course material” became “Professors posting or emailing a devotional thought.” Finally, the question “Professors praying alone for students outside of class” was reworded as “Professors interacting with students around prayer requests.”
The following six items did not load on either Credible Integration or Mentoring in the previous iteration of the survey were therefore removed for the current version. These include the following:

“Professors sharing their views (both positive and negative) on non-academic matters in class.”

“Professors being open to student opinions on integration even when these differ from their own.”

“Professors admitting mistakes to students when professors make them.”

“Professors teaching Christian ethical principles of conduct relevant to the job professions derived from my major.”

“Professors sharing their faith journey with students.”

“While taking a course, having a sense of God’s presence with us as a class.”

Finally, seven new items designed to capture aspects unique to online learning processes were added, including the following:

“Assigned readings specific to integration.”

“Professor’s discussion board interactions with students.”

“Video demonstrations of integration techniques.”

“Including case studies in my courses related to integration.”

“Community Center (Prayer request & praise report discussion board area).”

“Viewing PowerPoint/PointCast presentations on integration-related material.”

“Interacting with professors during intensive classes (e.g., COUN 505, 512, 667).”

The resultant version of the survey was given to a pilot group of approximately 20 counseling students outside of the target program. The pilot group did not report confusion on
questions and their responses were recorded accurately. These pilot responses were deleted prior to distributing the survey to the target population.

**Scaling Modifications**

The “Importance” and “Satisfaction” Likert response choices were modified in the current survey as well. Choices for “Importance” included end points of “Among the Most Important” as the top choice and “Among the Least Important”. The middle choice was labeled as “Neutral” and the points between this and the end points were selectable but not labeled. This procedure was selected to encourage variability in participant responses. It was thought that participants might select the top choice more frequently when labeled with “Extremely Important” as opposed to “Among the Most Important”. That is, respondents could view many or all items as “extremely important” and rate them as such, resulting in a lack of variability. In asking participants to rate based on the “among the most, among the least” scale, it was hoped that the very top and bottom choices would be selected less frequently, resulting in greater variation and less of a ceiling effect.

The “Satisfaction” scale choices were as follows: Very Dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Somewhat Dissatisfied, Neutral, Somewhat Satisfied, Satisfied, Very Satisfied. Additionally, “No Opportunity to Observe” was added as a choice, as some participants were likely to feel that a particular item was not present in their experience. Respondents were still able to rate importance if “No Opportunity to Observe” was selected.

**Procedures**

After obtaining approval from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB), 457 participants were recruited. The participants for this study were invited via emailed online
class announcements to take part in the study. Proper consent was obtained and a statement related to confidentiality and potential risks and benefits was provided. Participants completed a brief online survey (with an estimated completion time of 10-15 minutes), related to integration adapted from Garzon (2013, 2015). The survey link was made available via the invitation email. The survey includes the following brief definition of integration to ensure participants are oriented to the main concept being addressed.

In general, Christian integration has been described as how Christian principles, values, practices, and worldview perspectives are brought into the theory and practice of counseling. This general definition recognizes the fact that students at most Christian universities have unique ideas about what Christian integration is. Consequently, this survey will help us answer this question: What does Christian integration mean to you as a student? Since we suspect that there are many different opinions among students, your perspective matters. This survey is anonymous to permit you to respond honestly.

Participants were invited to enter a drawing for a $25 gift card incentive for participation. The survey results were collected using Qualtrics, an online survey tool. The invitation to participate was sent to email addresses belonging only to those students currently enrolled in an online counseling program at the target university. The survey was open for 14 days, with a reminder announcement being sent one week after the initial email. The large pool of students surveyed was expected to yield enough responses to carry out the study and to retrieve the desired statistical information.

Data Analysis
The data from the survey were imported into IBM’s SPSS software for analysis. Recoding of values was done within Qualtrics, the survey software, prior to exporting to SPSS. In answering the first research question, the items previously included in factors of Credible Integration and Mentoring were assessed for reliability with the computation of the Cronbach’s Alpha for each. These analyses contained only the items that were a part of the scales in previous survey iterations (including items that were slightly reworded for applicability in an online program). Scale items were then evaluated for sufficient item total weighting. Questions with item total weights less than .5 were omitted from a subsequent exploratory factor analysis with an oblimin rotation, which included all “Importance” items that had been added to the new version of the survey. The scree plot was utilized to determine the number of distinct factors. Finally, a Cronbach’s Alpha was computed to measure the reliability of each of the emergent constructs. Research question two was addressed with a paired samples t-test comparing the mean values of the identified factors and assessing for statistical significance. The third research question, which explores whether or not students are satisfied with their schools performance in the identified ITP areas, was addressed by observing each mean satisfaction ratings. Frequency tables were produced to identify the percent of individuals who rated each area above a Neutral rating. Finally, Importance and Satisfaction ratings were compared to one another by transforming student ratings in each area to z-scores, comparing the means with a paired samples t-test, and assessing the table for statistical significance.

**Ethical Considerations**

Students were made aware that participation in this study is voluntary, both via the initial invitation to participate as well as in the survey itself. The data collected was accessible only
through a secure login also requiring a university-given username and password and was accessed only on password-protected computers. Student responses were confidential and not tied to the respondent’s actual name or identity in any way, and only the researcher and dissertation committee have access to the responses. Students were prompted to opt into the drawing for the gift card by entering their email address as a response to a question not tied to the rest of their responses in a separate Survey Monkey online survey.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided detailed information and procedures implemented for the current study. The current study was designed to explore student perceptions of integrated teaching practices in an online counseling program. The specific research questions and hypotheses related to this purpose were provided and the general characteristics of the sample have been given. A history of the development of the survey instrument, including final adjustments to the instrument for utilization in the current study, was included. The study procedures, statistical analyses conducted to produce data to address each research question, and the ethical considerations of the study were described. The following chapter will provide an overview of the results gathered.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the values and satisfaction in learning integration held by a population of online graduate counseling students. The first research question sought to determine which factors of integrating teaching practices (ITPs) values, if any, emerged as important to students with specific attention given to whether or not the previously identified factors of Credible Integration and Mentoring (Garzon, 2015), remained salient. The second research question sought to determine whether or not students valued a particular ITP factor the most. Third, the next question was designed to assess whether or not students were satisfied in these areas. The final research question investigated whether or not a “gap” between student value (as measured by Importance) and Satisfaction existed. Post hoc analyses were included to provide descriptive information of student values at the individual item level. This also included descriptive information on the learning modalities (e.g., course texts or discussion boards) in which students must have enjoyed receiving integration instruction, as well as which of these modalities students would most like to see additional integration materials included. Participation was requested of a sample of approximately 3000 online graduate counseling students from which 457 response sets were gathered.

Chapter Organization

The following chapter provides a summary of results, including an overview of the demographics of the sample and followed by a discussion of the analyses performed and subsequent results obtained for each hypothesis. Data tables for each analysis are presented.
Additional descriptive information salient to the nature of the study are described in narrative form and presented via data tables as well.

**Summary of Results**

The following section includes an overview of sample demographic information. Each research question is then restated, with the analysis performed and results gathered provided for each.

**Demographics**

The survey was administered to students enrolled in an online professional counseling program in a mid-sized Christian university ($n = 457$). The population invited to participate was approximately 3000 students, meaning a response rate of approximately 15% was reached. There were 362 female and 87 male respondents. Ages of participants ranged from 23 to 68 years of age. The mean age was 41.9 with a standard deviation of 11.0. There were 84 participants in their 20s, 110 in their 30s, 133 in their 40s, 91 in their 50s, and 28 in their 60s. There were 328 White/Caucasian respondents, 76 African American, 21 Hispanic, two Asian, and one Native American. Eighteen respondents identified their race as “Other” and 11 did not respond to this question. Religious denomination was also collected, with Non-denominational being indicated 184 times, followed by Baptist with 122 responses, Charismatic/Pentecostal with 55 responses, Other with 34, Methodist with 14, Episcopal with 7, and Lutheran with 3. Seven participants did not respond. See Table 4.1 below for a summary of the demographics.
Table 4.1

Demographic Frequencies of the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Pop. Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>23.6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>133</td>
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<td>25.1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denomination</td>
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<td>Baptist</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Charismatic/Pente</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methodist 14 3.1 5.1
Episcopal 7 1.6 -
Lutheran 3 0.7 -

Note: Pop. Percentage = University statistics for the entire program population as self-reported by students.

The research questions were addressed utilizing the above-described sample of respondents. However, the survey remained open for approximately one week past the date of analyses. The following table contains updated demographic information.

Table 4.2

Demographic Frequencies, Updated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>60s</td>
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<td>5.4</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African American</td>
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<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hispanic 22 4.4
Asian 3 0.6
Native American 2 0.4
Other 20 4.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-denominational</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charismatic/Pentecostal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question One**

What factors of integrative teaching practices (ITPs) values emerge as reliable constructs for a population of online graduate counseling students? It was hypothesized that Credible Integration and Mentoring, the factors last identified in Garzon’s (2015) research would emerge as reliable constructs for the current population of online graduate counseling students. In addressing the first research question, the items previously included in factors of Credible Integration and Mentoring were assessed for reliability with the computation of the Cronbach’s
Alpha for each. These analyses contained the items that were a part of the scales in previous survey iterations (including items that were slightly reworded for applicability in an online program). Scale items were then evaluated for sufficient item total weighting. An exploratory factor analysis with an oblimin rotation was then preformed and included items from the previous analysis with an item total weighting of .5 or above as well as the new survey items. The scree plot was examined to determine the number of factors and Cronbach’s Alpha score for each was computed.

**Summary of Results**

The Cronbach’s Alpha scores for the Credible Integration construct, which contains seven items was \( \alpha = .859 \). The Mentoring scale contains six items and demonstrated a Cronbach’s Alpha of \( \alpha = .775 \). Item total weighting was evaluated for each item on the two scales. All but one item on the Credible Integration scale were rated at a .5 or above. The item “Having classmates that are actively practicing their faith” had a factor loading below .5, however, it was not thrown out as it was judged to have good face validity and was close to the cutoff at .499. Items in the Mentoring scale produced similar results with most items evidencing adequate item total weighting. The item “Professors spending time interacting online with students in matters unrelated to course content but important to the students” did have a weight lower than .5, but was also judged to have good face validity, and its weight of .498 was also judged as sufficient to allow the item to remain. However, “Participating in integration-related research leading to conference presentations that promote a Christian worldview” had a weighting of only .347. This item was subsequently thrown out of the next analysis.

To further investigate the factor structure and to test for the presence of the two previously-identified factors of Credible Integration and Mentoring with the new items included,
an exploratory factor analysis with an oblimin rotation was then preformed with all items except for “Participating in integration-related research leading to conference presentations that promote a Christian worldview.” The analysis indicated four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. However, examination of the scree plot indicated only two distinct factors. Credible Integration remained the first factor and its items were unchanged. The Mentoring scale included all of its previous items except for “Participating in integration-related research leading to conference presentations that promote a Christian worldview.” This new “Online Mentoring” factor had the five remaining original items and a greater alpha value than the original Mentoring scale (\( \alpha = .822 \)). Histograms for each factor were examined for normal distribution. In all cases the histograms evidenced negative skews, but were judged to be sufficiently normal to satisfy the necessary assumption for the analysis.

Thus, the null hypothesis for research question one was rejected, as Credible Integration and Mentoring emerged as constructs through tests of internal consistency with its previously-included items as well as an exploratory factor analysis with newly added items included. In each case items demonstrated sufficient item total weighting with the exception of one item on the original Mentoring scale.
Table 4.3

**Item-Total Weighing – Credible Integration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparing and contrasting a biblical truth with a corresponding truth from my discipline.</td>
<td>.636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having classmates that are actively practicing their faith.</td>
<td>.499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying biblical principles to “real life” situations that can occur in the jobs related to the academic discipline I study.</td>
<td>.659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors displaying godly character.</td>
<td>.611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors having a firm commitment to Christian beliefs.</td>
<td>.716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating my major’s theories from a Christian worldview.</td>
<td>.706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors teaching appropriate Christian practices, interventions, or techniques that are relevant to my major.</td>
<td>.702</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4

**Item-Total Weighing – Mentoring**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participating in integration-related research leading to conference presentations that promote a Christian worldview.</td>
<td>.347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors spending time interacting online with students in matters unrelated to course content but important to the students</td>
<td>.498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors interacting with students around prayer requests</td>
<td>.658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors sharing their family life experiences with their students.</td>
<td>.552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors caring about their students’ personal lives in addition to students’ class work.</td>
<td>.549</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professors posting or emailing a devotional thought. .559

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pattern Matrix</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors having a firm commitment to Christian beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors displaying godly character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors teaching appropriate Christian practices, interventions, or techniques that are relevant to my major.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying biblical principles to “real life” situations that can occur in the jobs related to the academic discipline I study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating my major’s theories from a Christian worldview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having classmates that are actively practicing their faith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing and contrasting a biblical truth with a corresponding truth from my discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors interacting with students around prayer requests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Center (Prayer request &amp; praise report discussion board area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors sharing their family life experiences with their students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professors posting or emailing a devotional thought.

Professors caring about their students’ personal lives in addition to students’ class work.

Viewing PowerPoint/PointCast presentations on integration-related material.

Assigned readings specific to integration

Participating in integration-related research leading to conference presentations that promote a Christian worldview.

Including case studies in my courses related to integration

Video demonstrations of integration techniques

Interacting with professors during intensive classes (e.g., COUN 505, 512, 667).

Professors' discussion board interactions with students.

Professors spending time interacting online with students in matters unrelated to course content but important to the students

Table 4.6

*Item-Total Weighing – Online Mentoring*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professors sharing their family life experiences with their students.</td>
<td>.567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors interacting with students around prayer requests</td>
<td>.743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors caring about their students’ personal lives in addition to students’ class work.</td>
<td>.506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Center (Prayer request &amp; praise report discussion board area)</td>
<td>.658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors posting or emailing a devotional thought.</td>
<td>.619</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.1. Scree Plot.*
Research Question Two

The second research question is as follows: Which ITP factors emerge as most important to online graduate counseling students? It was hypothesized that online graduate counseling students will value Credible Integration more than Mentoring. A paired samples t-test comparing the mean values of the identified factors was utilized to address this question.

Summary of Results

The effect size, as indexed by r, was very large as described by Cohen (as cited by Warner, 2008), \( r = .439, p < .001 \). A paired samples t-test revealed a significant difference between Credible Integration (M = 6.125, SD = 0.833) and Online Mentoring (M = 5.060, SD = 1.057); \( t(389) = 20.646, p < 0.001 \). On average, Credible Integration is scored 1.065 Likert points higher than Online Mentoring in Importance (95% CI [0.964, 1.167]). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4.7

Paired Samples t-Test of Credible Integration and Online Mentoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SEM</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CR - OM</td>
<td>1.065</td>
<td>1.019</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.964</td>
<td>1.167</td>
<td>20.646</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. \(^a\)CR = Credible Integration. \(^b\)OM = Online Mentoring. \(^c\)SEM = Standard Error Mean \( P < .001 \) (2-tailed)
Research Question Three

Research question three reads: Are online counseling students satisfied with their school’s performance in the identified ITP factors? It was hypothesized that participants’ average rating of both Credible Integration and Online Mentoring would exceed a four on a 7-point Likert scale. This hypothesis was investigated by calculating average mean satisfaction scores for both factors. Additionally, frequency tables were created to determine the percentage of students who rated each of the scales below a Neutral rating.

Summary of Results

A frequency table revealed a mean value of 5.944 (SD = 0.871) for Credible Integration satisfaction and a mean value of 5.563 (SD = 0.982) for Online Mentoring satisfaction. Additionally, frequency tables for satisfaction scores revealed that only 4.6% of participants’ average satisfaction rating for Online Mentoring was below 4 (Neutral), and only 2.9% of participants’ average satisfaction rating for Credible Integration was below 4 (Neutral). Therefore, the null hypothesis stating online graduate counseling students’ average rating of the ITP factors will not exceed a four on a 7-point Likert scale was rejected.

Table 4.8

Descriptive Statistics – Online Mentoring and Credible Integration Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credible Integration</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>5.944</td>
<td>0.871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Mentoring</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>5.563</td>
<td>0.982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SD = Standard Deviation.
Table 4.9

**Online Mentoring Satisfaction Frequency Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat 1 to &lt; 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 2 to &lt; 3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 3 to &lt; 4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 4 to &lt; 5</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 5 to &lt; 6</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 6 to &lt; 7</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat = 7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Sat = Satisfaction.

Table 4.10

**Online Credible Integration Satisfaction Frequency Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat 1 to &lt; 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 2 to &lt; 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 3 to &lt; 4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 4 to &lt; 5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 5 to &lt; 6</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 6 to &lt; 7</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>90.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat = 7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Sat = Satisfaction.

**Research Question Four**

The final research question sought to determine whether or not a difference exists between the sample’s satisfaction and rated importance in each ITP factor. It was hypothesized that low disparity between students’ ratings of value and perceived presence of ITP areas in their program would be observed. Average ratings of Importance and Satisfaction were standardized to z-scores, which were then compared with a paired samples t-test.
Summary of Results

A $t$-test comparing the differences between Importance and Satisfaction $z$-scores for both
Credible Integration and Online Mentoring failed to demonstrate an acceptable level of
significance ($p = .918$ and $p = .805$, respectively). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 4.11

Paired Samples $t$-Test of Credible Integration and Online Mentoring Importance and
Satisfaction $z$-scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% CI Upper</th>
<th>95% CI Lower</th>
<th>95% CI Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Zscore: CR Satisfaction - Zscore: CR Importance</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>1.095</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>-.110</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>-.103</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>.918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>Zscore: OM Importance - Zscore: OM Satisfaction</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>1.009</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>-.087</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>.247</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>.805</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Additional Descriptive Information

The following section provides descriptive information on individual importance items
from the survey as well as descriptive information for questions that were asked about specific
learning modalities. These data are informative as a part of program evaluation.

Importance of Individual Items

The “importance” items were designed with a 7-point Likert scale from “Among the
Least Important” to “Among the Most Important.” If participants rated six or more items as
“Among the Most Important,” they were asked to choose a selection of only five of these as their top choices in importance. The next question then asked respondents to choose three items out of those five, and this question was also presented to those who had chosen four or five items as “Among the Most Important” in the Likert items. Finally, respondents were asked to choose the top choice out of the previously-identified three items. This question was also displayed for those who had chosen two items as “Among the Most Important” in the Likert items. Responses from those who did not see every question (e.g., someone who did not see the “rate the top 5” question because of selecting a total of four “Among the Most Important” choices) were included in the appropriate ranking category (top 5 choices, top 3 choices, or top choice). The results are summarized in the table below. The table also includes a column indicating which of the two components the item belongs to, if applicable.
Table 4.12

*Frequency of Items Chosen as Top 5, 3, and Absolute Top Choice*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Within Top 5</th>
<th>Within Top 3</th>
<th>Top Choice</th>
<th>Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applying biblical principles to real life situations that can occur in the jobs related to the academic discipline I study.</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>CR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors teaching appropriate Christian practices, interventions, or techniques that are relevant to my major.</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>CR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting with professors during intensive classes (e.g., COUN 505, 512, 667).</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating my major’s theories from a Christian worldview.</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>CR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors displaying godly character.</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>CR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing and contrasting a biblical truth with a corresponding truth from my discipline.</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>CR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors having a firm commitment to Christian beliefs.</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>CR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including case studies in my courses related to integration</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video demonstrations of integration techniques</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors’ discussion board interactions with students.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors caring about their students’ personal lives in addition to students’ class work.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>OM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned readings specific to integration.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors posting or emailing a devotional thought.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>OM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having classmates that are actively practicing their faith.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>CR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Viewing PowerPoint/PointCast presentations on integration-related material. 27 14 0 None

Professors spending time interacting online with students in matters unrelated to course content but important to the students 22 11 4 None

Participating in integration-related research leading to conference presentations that promote a Christian worldview. 20 7 3 None

Professors sharing their family life experiences with their students. 14 8 0 OM

Professors interacting with students around prayer requests 13 4 0 OM

Community Center (Prayer request & praise report discussion board area) 8 4 0 OM

Notes: ^CR = Credible Integration.  ^OM = Online Mentoring.

Preferred Learning Modalities

Participants were also asked to rate learning modalities in various ways. First, students were asked, “Currently, please rank in order the formats you have liked the best in receiving integration instruction for your online classes, with 1 being the most liked to 6 being the least liked.” See Table 4.13 for a summary of responses. Respondents were then given the opportunity to rank the same items individually on a 5-point Likert scale. It is important to note that “top” choices are indicated by a low number on the rank order question represented in Table 4.13 (i.e., “the number one choice”), while a high number indicates a more favored item for the Likert scale question represented in Table 4.14. Both tables are arranged with the most favored choices on the top with the following choices listed in descending order. Finally, another rank-
order question was asked wherein students rank-ordered which areas they would like to see additional online integration instruction, with a rating of 1 being the most desired area of increase. Table 4.15 summarizes these results.

Table 4.13

*Descriptive Statistics – Rank Order; Formats Enjoyed*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integration-related therapy case example videos</td>
<td>2.4481</td>
<td>1.69930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Texts or articles</td>
<td>3.1250</td>
<td>1.55618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PowerPoint/PointCast Lectures</td>
<td>3.3915</td>
<td>1.52908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards</td>
<td>3.5873</td>
<td>1.59103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual email interactions with the professor</td>
<td>3.9835</td>
<td>1.62783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>4.4646</td>
<td>1.69930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. The lower the mean score, the more favored the choice.*

Table 4.14

*Descriptive Statistics (5 Pt Likert) – Rate Enjoyment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integration-related therapy case example videos</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>.788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Texts or articles</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>.862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual email interactions with the professor</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>.888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PowerPoint/PointCast Lectures</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.944</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. The higher the mean score, the more favored the choice.*
Table 4.15

*Descriptive Statistics – What Students Would Like to See More of in the Future*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integration-related therapy case example videos</td>
<td>2.5741</td>
<td>1.59592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face Interactions online (Video chat, etc.)</td>
<td>3.4047</td>
<td>2.23838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PowerPoint/PointCast Lectures</td>
<td>3.8894</td>
<td>1.65959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Textbooks or articles</td>
<td>3.8941</td>
<td>1.72812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual email interactions with the professor</td>
<td>4.3647</td>
<td>1.85721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards</td>
<td>4.4753</td>
<td>1.81580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>5.3976</td>
<td>1.81308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The lower the mean score, the more favored the choice.

Because the program involved in this study has an on-campus component, mean importance and satisfaction scores for both components were compared between students who had and had not yet attended an on-campus intensive course. No significant differences were found in either importance ratings or satisfaction ratings on either scale. The results are summarized in the table below.
Table 4.16

*Independent Samples Test – Intensive vs Non-Intensive Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>MD</th>
<th>STD</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upp er</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MI</td>
<td>EVA</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>.727</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>-.231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENA</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>167.014</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>-.234</td>
<td>.256</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
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*Notes.* CI = Credible Integration Important, CS = Credible Integration Satisfaction, ENA = Equal Variances not assumed, EVA = Equal variances assumed, MD = Mean difference, MI = Mentoring Importance, MS = Mentoring Satisfaction STD = Standard Error Difference

**Chapter Summary**

The purpose of this study was to explore the values in learning integration held by a population of online graduate counseling students. Specifically, four research questions were investigated to determine the following: what factors emerge as important to participants, which of these factors were seen as most important, whether or not students were satisfied in their school’s performance in these areas, and whether or not a difference existed between participants overall ratings of satisfaction versus level of importance in these factors. The null hypothesis in
research question one was rejected, as Credible Integration and Mentoring emerged as factors in this sample. The null hypothesis in research question two was rejected as well. Credible Integration was demonstrated to be more important to the respondents at a statistically significant level. Research question three’s null hypothesis was rejected, as student ratings of satisfaction were found to be above a neutral rating for both factors in over 95% of cases. The null hypothesis for research question four was accepted; there was no significant disparity between the $z$-scores of importance and satisfaction on either factor. Descriptive information was provided demonstrating which items scale students endorsed most frequently as their top choice, within the top three choices, and within the top five choices in importance. Finally, descriptive information related to the learning modalities in which participants have most enjoyed receiving integration instruction, as well as those in which participants would like to see more integration instruction, were presented. The following chapter will present a discussion of these findings, including conclusions, limitations, and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter Organization

The following chapter provides a discussion of the results for each of the four research questions proposed for the study. These findings are then considered in relation to previous research on integration pedagogy. Suggestions for furthering research in this area are given, as are the potential limitations of this research. Finally, the chapter concludes with summary sections for both the chapter itself and for the dissertation as a whole.

Factors of ITP Importance

Research question one investigated what factors of integrative teaching practice (ITP) values would emerge as reliable constructs for a population of online graduate counseling students. It was hypothesized that Credible Integration and Mentoring, the factors last identified in Garzon’s (2015) research would emerge as reliable constructs for the current sample of online graduate counseling students. Despite differences in online and resident students’ needs and learning styles, it seemed likely that those two basic elements would hold true for online learners. Despite a lack of true face-to-face instruction in online learning, there are ways for professors to provide real interactions to their students online (Major, 2010; Revere & Kovach, 2011), so the concept of mentoring is not lost in an online environment.

Again, this held true, and the two previously identified factors of Credible Integration and Mentoring required little modification; only one low-loading Mentoring item, as well as two inapplicable items that required physical proximity, were excluded, and Credible Integration
remained exactly the same. Rewording the mentoring items to be more applicable to an online learning environment reflects the ease with which “residential” mentoring can be applied to online environments. It appears more accurate to say that mentoring is simply done differently online rather than not done at all.

**Discussion of Credible Integration**

The construct of Credible Integration in this study contains the same items as the most recent research by Garzon (2015). The Credible Integration is an interesting construct; it contains both items that relate to the person of the professor as well as more “practical” aspects of integration pedagogy. For example, “Applying biblical principles to real life situations that can occur in the jobs related to the academic discipline I study” is very practically oriented and has clear implications for students learning how to translate theoretical constructs into the “real world.” The item, “Professors displaying godly character” loads on Credible Integration as well, and shares the sense of “real world” application; a professor must be godly to teach about godly things. The former item deals specifically with curriculum, the latter to the person of the professor, but both items relate to Credible Integration; is the integration being taught “credible” and “real,” or is it somehow compromised by being solely theoretical or taught by individuals who have no real connection to the material?

Credible Integration, then, is more than just information; it has to do with the information given and the person giving the information. Farnsworth (1982) introduced the concept of “embodied integration,” that faculty members must actually live out concepts of integration as opposed to simply teaching them. The items loaded on this factor speak to this; Credible Integration as a construct contains both “informational” items and “person of the professor” items. Educators appear to see the importance of this “lived out” integration, as many have
described some form of modeling as important to integration pedagogy (Anderson, 2014; Aten et al., 2007; Cook & Leonard, 2014; Devers, 2013; Eriksson & Abernethy, 2014; Flanagan et al., 2011; Iselin & Meteyard, 2010; J. Jones, 2007; Mathisen, 2003; Matthias, 2008; Olson et al., 2011; Poelstra, 2009; Ripley & Dwiwardani, 2014; Sites et al., 2009; Sorenson, 1994; Tisdale et al., 2013; Watson & Eveleigh, 2014; Woods et al., 2012). Sorenson’s study found that students considered “evidence of a professor’s ongoing process in a personal relationship with God” to be the most important element in their integration learning (1997, p. 541). Sorenson conceptualized this as an element of attachment. In the current study, the concept of a professor’s relationship with God remains important but loads on Credible Integration. That is, it has more to do with the credibility of the professor than the professor serving as an attachment figure. Previous iterations of the survey (Garzon, 2011, 2013) loaded items concerning professor faith on their own factor (Garzon, 2011, 2013), but most recent version retained the “professor’s relationship with God” item onto Credible Integration as well. Thus, Credible Integration contains elements of both content delivery and content deliverer, and this factor provides an interesting take on how exactly the character and spiritual walk of a professor make a difference in instruction.

**Discussion of Online Mentoring**

The general idea of mentoring has been of particular interest to this study since Sorenson (1994, 1997) theorized that students learn integration through an attachment relationship to the professor. Mentoring related items that could facilitate attachment would be congruent with this perspective. This factor did indeed emerge for this population and was only slightly modified. This construct appears the same in its focus and meaning, and only a slight adjustment to the online environment is helpful.
Online students have demonstrated differences in learning preferences when compared to residential learners, and some of these differences relate specifically to concepts of mentoring. Online learners are typically more motivated and self-directed than their residential counterparts (Berenson et al., 2008) and view professors as facilitators rather than directive leaders (Cercone, 2008). Self-direction appears to be reflected in the sample’s favoring of Credible Integration above Online Mentoring in mean importance as well as in the forced-selection items. This is discussed in more detail below in the “Importance Ranking” section, but the main finding of this study related to mentoring is that it does exist online and is indeed important to students, albeit less so than Credible Integration.

Comparison to Residential

The presence of the same factors in both this study and the previously-studied residential setting lends credence to Garzon’s (2015) research. Credible Integration and Mentoring are useful constructs in conceptualizing student values in learning integration, and these concepts appear to apply to both residential and online settings. In fact, the same items remained on the factors that had been included in previous research apart from three mentoring items; two that were only applicable to face-to-face interactions (e.g., professors inviting students into their homes), as well as the one item that loaded low on the factor. Thus, evidence for the presence of these two factors has grown with this study and appears to apply in both residential and online environments.

Importance Ranking

Research question two sought to determine which factor was most important to the participants. This was observed through mean importance ratings. Students found both factors
important on average, but Credible Integration was significantly more important to them than Online Mentoring. This was similar to Garzon’s (2015) findings, as well as the previous research, that indicated students value what was then referred to as “applied integration” (2011, 2013). Students value practical, credible teaching practices as a top priority. Conceptually, this makes sense; students want to know the practical value of what they are being taught and they want to know that their professors have the authority to teach this. This may be no different than any other teaching area; students want to learn the subject matter before them from individuals qualified to deliver instruction.

Mentoring was important to students as well, but not rated as highly. Interestingly, when respondents were asked to choose their top five items that they had rated as “Among the Most Important,” followed by the top three items of those five, and finally their very top choice, the Credible Integration items tended to be chosen most often, whereas most of the Online Mentoring items were chosen the least often. That is, when respondents were forced to choose, they chose items related to Credible Integration. While students may find Online Mentoring important, Credible Integration is viewed as more essential, and the contrast becomes starker when the choice is forced.

The findings of this study demonstrate that online counseling students find credible, practical integration teaching delivered by genuinely qualified professors most important to their learning. Simply put, they want to be told how to “do” integration. Sorenson’s supposition that attachment relationships are important to integration learning may appear to counter this finding. However, an alternative view of his work suggests a way that the two conceptualizations of learner values may complement one another.
Sorenson’s initial finding (1994) that students found interactions with their therapists more helpful in their integration learning was originally interpreted as evidence that greater connection and attachment fostered greater learning. However, the present study offers a different potential interpretation to his work. It may be that these experiences were helpful not exclusively because of the relationship between the therapist and student, but because of the fact that students were observing integration in practice; practical, credible integrative techniques embodied by a qualified and credible person. Interestingly, the first dimension in what students found helpful in their professors in Sorenson’s later work (1997) included Evidence of Ongoing Process in a Personal Relationship with God (which was seen as most important), Emotional Transparency, and Sense of Humor. Similar findings that evidence of professor’s commitment to God was most important to students were found in additional studies (Sorenson et al., 2004; Staton et al., 1998). Professor commitment to God can be easily compared with Credible Integration, which included “Professors displaying godly character” and “Professors having firm commitment to Christian beliefs.” Observed in the context of Credible Integration, these are practical features of learning and not necessarily attachment-related. Godly character and commitment lend credibility to professors and show that they “know what they’re talking about,” which can include personal traits beyond strictly possessing knowledge.

Of course, it is difficult to parse out how much the helpfulness of the therapists (who were found more helpful than the sample’s professors) in Sorenson’s (1994) theory can be attributed to attachment versus practical demonstration. Also, the current study also explored student opinions on what is important, which does not necessarily equate to actual learning. Future research comparing integration learning in students with differing levels of attachment to
their professors while also controlling for credible learning would serve as a valuable next step in exploring the veracity of Sorenson’s theory.

**Satisfaction**

The third research question explored student satisfaction; are online counseling students satisfied with their school’s performance in the identified ITP factors? Mean values for each factor were determined to be above a 4 (Neutral) on the 7-point Likert scale, and frequency tables also showed that the vast majority of the respondents had mean scores above a neutral rating. Again, the null hypothesis was rejected, as participants demonstrated satisfaction in each area.

Students demonstrated satisfaction in each of the factors of integration to a large degree. The call for research on student perspectives in integration has been motivated by the desire to ensure student satisfaction, and the results for this population are encouraging from a program evaluation perspective. The results mirror those of McMinn and colleagues’ (2011) work that have found students to be satisfied overall with their school’s performance in delivering integration instruction. Garzon’s (2007, 2009, 2013, 2015) works found similar results as well.

Teaching practices may have been primarily influenced by professor ideas and intuition, but this approach appears successful in assessing student satisfaction. The way faculty have been teaching integration has been working, at least in student perception. It should be noted that satisfaction does not necessarily indicate learning, and the purpose of this study was not to measure participants’ actual grasp of integration material. Satisfaction is still important, and the current study helps to address the concern of a “mismatch” between student and professor values. There have been concerns that such differences could have negative effects on student
retention and satisfaction (Morris et al., 2003; Schreiner, 2000). Additional considerations for how these results could inform educational practice are discussed in the Implications for Practice section below.

**Minding the Gap**

The fourth research question was devised to determine whether or not a difference between importance ratings and satisfaction occurred in this population. On average, participants’ scores did not differ significantly between standardized importance and satisfaction scores for each area. A difference could have indicated an area of potential improvement from a program evaluation perspective. For example, had respondents rated Credible Integration as highly important, but their satisfaction in the area was significantly lower, an opportunity to better address student expectations would have been exposed. Because there were so few students who indicated that they were less than satisfied in either area and because there were no meaningful gaps between satisfaction and importance, the results for this question do not indicate specific areas where immediate action should be taken. A “gaps” analysis was performed in the most recent version of Garzon’s (2015) research with both graduate and undergraduate populations. Similar results were found at the construct level.

**Post Hoc**

Although the post hoc analyses were not tied directly to the study research questions, their exploration provides valuable information. In measuring what students rated as top choices (top five, top three, and top choice), an interesting pattern emerged. The four of the five top-rated choices belong to the Credible Integration construct, but three of the five bottom-rated choices belong to Online Mentoring (see Table 4.12). The forced-choice questions were
designed to provide greater variation in responses, and this certainly happened. Despite the fact that participants rated both factors as important, Credible Integration items were favored greatly at an item-specific level. This makes sense; while students may value mentoring, it’s not likely it would be considered meaningful without credible instructors. Integration programs would do well to consider ways to increase or protect student confidence in the genuineness and applicability of professor instruction.

It is interesting to note that one of the Credible Integration items that was rated highly in importance by Garzon’s (2007) participants was chosen infrequently as a top choice for the current study’s sample. However, it is not difficult to interpret this finding. The item, “Classmates that are actively practicing their faith” obviously has greater weight in a residential environment. In an online environment, students do interact with one another, typically in the form of asynchronous message boards. This means that students are able to choose which students they will interact with, and to what extent. In a residential environment, student participation typically happens synchronously and involves everyone in the class. Online students are able to ignore student interactions that do not appeal to them or that they find less helpful in their learning, in both a general sense and specifically applied to integration. In counseling classes students may also engage in practical demonstrations with professors. If students are not actively practicing their faith, students may view such demonstrations as less helpful in their integration learning. The self-directed nature of online students (Berenson et al., 2008; Watson, 2012) likely contributes to this finding. Cercone (2008) found that online students are less reliant on professors, and this finding indicates that online students are less reliant on their fellow classmates. Also, graduate students were found to rate their classmates’ faith lower in importance than undergraduate students (Garzon, 2015). Graduate students are
typically older individuals who are less likely to live on campus, which may indicate that with online graduate students, greater self-direction and independence led to this lower rating.

The learning modality items are further evidence of students’ desire for practical learning activities. Students in the sample chose “Integration-related therapy case example videos” as the most enjoyed integration learning modality in rank and on average within the separate Likert scale item. They rated case examples as the most desired increase as well. Students also chose face-to-face interactions online as a top choice for future increases. Discussion boards and announcements rated low. The prior integration studies from which the current survey was based did not include such items. Future research could benefit from repeating these items in different populations.

Implications for Practice

The emergence and confirmation of two factors in integration pedagogy are helpful in conceptualizing what students value most in integration. Credible Integration, which consists of practical aspects of learning and applying integrative principles, as well as Mentoring practices (in this study, tailored to an online environment), are distinct areas that can be utilized in developing and implementing ITPs. The presence of both factors demonstrates the importance of both curriculum itself, person of the professor, and the relationship between the professor and the student. As Sorenson (1997) proposed, relationship matters. Despite a lack of face-to-face interaction online, students value mentorship from professors. Credible Integration was found to be more valued than Online Mentoring, but Online Mentoring was still highly valued.

In evaluating the ITPs of a program, consideration should be given to both the delivery of information and the person of the professor. Program leadership would do well to consistently
assess the spiritual lives of faculty members; are they sufficiently “credible” in their spiritual lives to the extent that students are likely to receive information from them? The importance of faculty character has implications for hiring practices as well, which may already be practiced by Christian universities. The target university utilized for this study considers an applying professor’s spiritual life as well as their ability to deliver information when making hiring decisions. Such practice helps to ensure that professors are credible, even as defined by the Credible Integration construct. High student satisfaction in Credible Integration demonstrates that this is working; professors are viewed as credible.

In program development, students are very clearly indicating that they want practical demonstration of integration. Relational factors, then, should not be relied on too heavily to “teach” integration; students want to see it done, even literally through case studies in class. Practical demonstration is highest on students’ priority lists.

Interestingly, considering the general nature of the factors, this research may be an indication that integration is taught just like any other subject. The attention given to the subject of integration pedagogy is understandable; it is a unique and valued feature of online education, it toes the line between educational and personal development, and it involves an overarching worldview that has broad implications for understanding and practice throughout academia. Educators may feel an intuitive difference between teaching integration and other subjects. Still, the factors of Credible Integration and Online Mentoring describe, at their core, practical content delivery from qualified experts and a measure of personal connection between the professor and student, respectively. This serves as a fair description of formal education as a whole. Sorenson’s (1997) assertion that integration happens in relationship is mirrored by Vygotsky’s (1978) concepts of Social Constructivism and Zone of Proximal Development, which theorize
that relationship is important to learning. Still integration is important to explore; integration is a vital part of any Christian-based program. Christianity has important implications for understanding and applying content in general and specifically for counseling, and learning from a Christian perspective likely serves as a motivator for students to attend Christian schools. Thus, even if teaching integration can be done much in the same way as teaching other subjects or from other worldviews, it is important to understand this to inform and shape teaching practices in the best way possible. The following section will also address some aspects of practical application, as the literature on integration has been largely comprised of descriptions of ITP practices in various environments.

**Implications for Research**

The current study offers interesting and practical conclusions for this line of research. To some degree, the research builds well on Sorenson’s (1994, 1997) work, showing that online students, despite the differences in overall demographics and learning needs, certainly do value mentorship from faculty members. No previous work has considered student values and satisfaction of integration online, which other researchers have viewed as an important area of inquiry (Dominguez et al., 2009; Garzon & Hall, 2012). The study sheds some light on the limited available information on professor suggestions for integration online. Many of the suggestions educators have suggested to develop integration online are related to mentoring practices. For example, the suggestion to utilize discussion boards and phone conversations to foster belonging (Quinn, 2010) and utilization of recorded video messages (Anderson & Janzen, 2010) seem to fit with the concept of Online Mentoring. Interestingly, the limited available sources suggesting ITPs seem to relate very well with Credible Integration, which students in the
present study identified as most important. Practical examples of teaching integration such as challenging students assumptions in integration (Wilkinson & Chamberlain, 2010), as well as professor-focused concepts such as podcasts presenting a professor’s own faith journey and therefore demonstrating their character and commitment (Anderson & Janzen, 2010), and being trustworthy (credible) to students (Rieg, 2010), and being faithful Christians (Kelleher, 2010). Thus, these suggestions are validated, at least in their ability to satisfy student expectations.

It is important to note, however, that suggestions related to the character of the professor should not overshadow the importance of practical and applicable instruction. Sorenson’s (1997) work focuses on relationship and attachment, which could present the risk of devoting too much attention to relational factors to the detriment of these practical aspects. Professors have their ideas of how to “do” integration, but sometimes have vague relationship-focused ideas that might miss the practical aspects of Credible Integration. For example, professors may feel that integration is caught more than taught (Sorenson, 1994), and may see integration as occurring through professor modeling (Anderson, 2014; Aten et al., 2007; Cook & Leonard, 2014; Devers, 2013; Eriksson & Abernethy, 2014; Flanagan et al., 2011; Iselin & Meteyard, 2010; J. Jones, 2007; Mathisen, 2003; Matthias, 2008; Olson et al., 2011; Poelstra, 2009; Ripley & Dwiarwadani, 2014; Sites et al., 2009; Sorenson, 1994; Tisdale et al., 2013; Watson & Eveleigh, 2014; Woods et al., 2012). The present study does not imply that students undervalue modeling, but the practical aspects of how modeling might take place (e.g., through actual therapeutic demonstration) were underscored in this work.

It follows that the large body of practical examples of professor integration found in the literature is a good sign. Various educators describe integration as beginning with strong clinical skills (Adams et al., 2014; Flanagan et al., 2011; Graham-Howard & Scott, 2011; Johnson &
Hathaway, 2004; Olson et al., 2011), practical understanding and application of theological beliefs (Cook & Leonard, 2014; Eriksson & Abernethy, 2014; Flanagan et al., 2011; Wolf, 2011), and the use of vignettes dealing with spiritual issues (Anderson, 2014; Manfred-Gilham, 2009; Tan, 2009), and even teaching an entire approach to counseling based on already-existent models while integrating Christian values and understandings (Turns et al., 2013). Based on the current study, such practices are important to counseling students in online learning environments. These can be adapted seamlessly from residential environments to online venues. Therefore, the current work lends credence to many professor suggestions for integration while favoring the importance of credible, practical applications.

**Recommendations**

The survey was able to collect a large number of responses, and its development was built upon the previous work of Garzon (2007, 2009, 2013, 2015) and colleagues (Hall et al., 2009; Ripley et al., 2009), as well as Sorenson’s (1997) theory on integration pedagogy. However, it is important to consider that there has been very little done in terms of exploring these concepts with online students. Gathering information on online student perceptions was, of course, a part of the study’s unique purpose. However, qualitative research in this area is warranted. Qualitative research could potentially result in unexplored themes of importance being discovered that are unique to an online population of students. While online students seem to have answered similarly to resident students, it is plausible that differences exist that are not accounted for by the current survey design. Specifically, it is important to understand if online students differ in their desire for mentorship and how they expect to see mentorship carried out in an online setting specific to integration.
The current study is an exploration of student perspectives, but it is not an exploration of actual student competencies. The measurements consisted of importance ratings, to help determine what students most value, and satisfaction ratings, to see if students are getting what they want in integration instruction. Student values and satisfaction are certainly important, but they do not necessarily equate to the end goal of establishing student competencies in integration. Respondents for this study indicated that they favored Credible Integration to Mentoring, but this doesn’t necessarily mean that Credible Integration teaches them best. Future research on what ITPs are predictive of student skill would be a helpful next step in this area. Comparison of skill-predictive ITPs and the current study could help program leaders understand how to best balance student expectations and student competency outcomes. Additionally, measuring professor values and comparing these to both student expectations and student competencies would be helpful. Such research could demonstrate areas in which both students and professors might be served by adjusting their values to better lead to effective integration learning.

The present study is built upon multiple past administrations and subsequent survey revisions. Therefore, the existence of a two-factor structure of student values has strong backing. However, though the refinement of the survey and understanding of the factors has increased, the potential interactions between the factors have not yet been explored. For example, does Credible Integration somehow mediate Mentoring? Perhaps Mentoring only matters when Credible Integration occurs at a sufficient level. Exploring such relationships would likely give additional insight to student perceptions as well as successful ITPs.


**Limitations**

A lack of variability in both importance and satisfaction response is a potential limitation. The research was designed to help mitigate the potential for negatively skewed distributions by wording responses on the importance scale with “Among the Most Important” rather than the originally formulated response of “Extremely Important.” This was done to encourage respondents to rate fewer items at the highest rating and to create greater variability in responses. Respondents could very well see many things as “Extremely Important” and therefore rate many items as such, but “Among the Most Important” is thought to encourage ratings more in line with a rank ordering. Another method for ensuring variability was employed through the use of forced-choice questions for individual items. Participants were asked to choose only their top five most important items, then three of those five, then a final choice as most important. Those that chose fewer than six responses as “Among the Most Important” were given appropriate questions and/or had their responses recorded in categories as applicable. Still, both histograms for Credible Integration and Online Mentoring were weighted towards positive responses and demonstrated a negative skew. While their distributions were judged to be sufficiently normal for the subsequent analyses, greater variability would have been preferable.

The sample itself may also be a limitation of this research. The current study utilized only one school to gather its sample and students were exposed to integration in a manner consistent with that particular school; other schools could potentially vary in their approaches to integration. That said, the sample did include a good distribution of participants from varying ages and religious denominations. Caucasian individuals were highly represented and made up about 73% of the sample. African American individuals made up 17% of the sample, less than 5% of the sample consisted of Hispanic respondents, and there were only two total respondents
who identified as Asian and one who identified as Native American. Thus, additional research with diverse populations is warranted, and results from the current study may not be generalizable to diverse populations.

Also of note, 80% of the sample identified as female. Ripley et al. (2009) found some differences between men and women’s values in integration. The researchers found that females scored more highly rating the importance of integration in their program than men (Ripley et al., 2009). Future research on gender-based differences could be helpful in parsing out specific needs of male and female students in learning integration.

Additionally, integration instructions can be done in various ways, and the target university subscribes to a particular school of thought on how it can best be done. Students may have chosen this school because of their awareness for how the school teaches integration, and therefore may have a bias toward favoring the approaches used for teaching integration. That said, the demographics of the sample represent the demographics of the population well; future researchers utilizing the same measure could inspect the demographics of their samples to determine whether or not they represent their target population.

Semantic difficulties may also affect this study. The term “integration” has been notoriously difficult to define (Badley, 1994, 2009; Bailey, 2012; Burton & Nwosu, 2003; Devers, 2013; Dobmeier & Reiner, 2012; Dominguez et al., 2009; Grace & Poelstra, 1995; Hodges, 1994; S. Jones, 2006; Miller, 2014; Reeder & Pacino, 2013). This ambiguity of the term and similarity to other terms such as “spiritual development” may muddy the waters in some ways. For example, Butler (2013) conducted a qualitative dissertation study that explored student opinions on how faculty impacted their spiritual development. The concept of spiritual development is important and perhaps even seen as an “educational” goal in Christian
universities (Butler, 2013), however, this is distinct from integration learning in that it is not contingent on cognitive understanding of content. Thus, integration-related studies may have some relationship to those on spiritual development, but conclusions and interactions between the two must be approached cautiously.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a summary of the study, including a brief restatement of each research question and their results. The implications of the results for each research question were discussed and compared with findings from previous research. Implications for practice and research were described. The observed limitations were also discussed, and suggestions for future research were given.

Study Summary

This study sought to examine online graduate-level counseling student values and satisfaction in integration in their program. It built directly on the work of others who sought to understand student perspectives in integration (Hall et al., 2009; Garzon, 2007, 2009, 2013, 2015; Ripley et al., 2009). The study identified two factors in what students find important in learning integration, including Credible Integration and Online Mentoring. This mirrored the most recent survey findings collected by Garzon (2015). Participants were found to value the Credible Integration factor over Online Mentoring. They reported satisfaction in the delivery of both formats, and no significant “gaps” between z-scores of satisfaction and importance were found for either factor.
These findings are valuable in conceptualizing what students are seeking from their educational experience in an online Christian counseling program. They demonstrate the importance of providing practical instruction from individuals qualified in both their knowledge and character interested in connecting with their students. These findings also shed light on online learners in a way that has not been previously explored. Specifically, the needs and expectations of online learners appear very similar to their residential counterparts. Finally, these students demonstrated satisfaction in learning integration in their program, which shows that current attempts to meet student expectations have been successful.
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APPENDIX A: Informed Consent

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 1/21/16 to --
Protocol # 2403.012116

You are invited to take a 10-minute survey that explores your opinions on what you feel is important in the integration of Christianity and Counseling. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a student in one of Liberty University’s licensure counseling programs. We ask that you read this information about the survey before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Kevin Van Wynsberg, a student in the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision program as a part of the dissertation process.

Background Information:
In general, Christian integration has been described as how Christian principles, values, practices, and worldview perspectives are brought into the subject matter of an academic area. This general definition recognizes the fact that students at most Christian universities have unique ideas about what Christian integration is. Consequently, this survey will help us answer this question: What does Christian integration mean to you as a student? Since we suspect that there are many different opinions among students, your perspective matters. This survey is anonymous to permit you to respond honestly.

Procedures:
If you agree to take this survey, we ask you to read each item and answer as honestly as you can. The survey takes about 10 minutes. The researcher and his dissertation committee will not know your identity.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:
The risks in taking this survey are no more than you would encounter in everyday life. Participants will not receive a direct benefit for participation.

Compensation:
Upon completion of this survey, you will have the opportunity to enter your name in a random drawing to win one of three $25 Barnes and Noble gift cards.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private. Mr. Van Wynsberg will receive the electronic data stripped of your identifying information and will store the data in his password-protected Liberty computer. In any sort of report he might publish, he will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you as a specific participant. Research records will be stored securely, and only Mr. Van Wynsberg or members of his research team will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this survey is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
Kevin Van Wynsberg is conducting this study. You may email him any current
questions you have or call him with those questions (email; phone). The faculty
advisor for the study is Dr. Fernando Garzon. He may be reached via email at email.

If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact Kevin Van Wynsberg at
the above email and phone number as well. If you have any questions or concerns
regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than Mr. Van
Wynsberg, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971
University Blvd, Carter 134, Lynchburg, Va. 24515 or email them at irb@liberty.edu.

Use “Print Screen” to create a copy of this information to keep for your
records. You may also email or call Kevin Van Wynsberg for another
copy.

Statement of Consent:
By clicking “I agree to participate,” I acknowledge that I have read and understood
the above information. I have asked any questions I have and have received answers.
I consent to participate in this survey.

I agree to participate  I decline to participate
APPENDIX B: Online Integration Survey

You are invited to take a 10 to 15-minute survey that explores your opinions on what you feel is important in the integration of Christianity and Counseling. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a student in one of Liberty University's licensure counseling programs. We ask that you read this information about the survey before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Kevin Van Wynsberg, a student in the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision program as a part of the dissertation process.

Background Information:
In general, Christian integration has been described as how Christian principles, values, practices, and worldview perspectives are brought into the subject matter of an academic area. This general definition recognizes the fact that students at most Christian universities have unique ideas about what Christian integration is. Consequently, this survey will help us answer this question: What does Christian integration mean to you as a student? Since we suspect that there are many different opinions among students, your perspective matters. This survey is anonymous to permit you to respond honestly.

Procedures:
If you agree to take this survey, we ask you to read each item and answer as honestly as you can. The survey takes about 10 minutes. The researcher and his dissertation committee will not know your identity.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:
The risks in taking this survey are no more than you would encounter in everyday life. Participants will not receive a direct benefit for participation.

Compensation:
Upon completion of this survey, you will have the opportunity to enter your name in a random drawing to win one of three $25 Barnes and Noble gift cards.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private. Mr. Van Wynsberg will receive the electronic data stripped of your identifying information and will store the data in his password-protected Liberty computer. In any sort of report he might publish, he will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you as a specific participant. Research records will be stored securely, and only Mr. Van Wynsberg or members of his research team will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this survey is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
Kevin Van Wynsberg is conducting this study. You may email him any current questions you have or call him with those questions [redacted]. The faculty advisor for the study is Dr. Fernando Garzon. He may be reached via email at [redacted].

If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact Kevin Van Wynsberg at the above email and phone number as well. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than Mr. Van Wynsberg, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1771 University Blvd, Carter 134, Lynchburg, Va. 24515 or email them at irb@liberty.edu.

Use “Print Screen” to create a copy of this information to keep for your records. You may also email or call Kevin Van Wynsberg for another copy.

Statement of Consent:
By clicking “I agree to participate”, I acknowledge that I have read and understood the above information. I have asked any questions I have and have received answers. I consent to participate in this survey.

I agree to participate
I decline to participate
In general, Christian integration has been described as how Christian principles, values, practices, and worldview perspectives are brought into the subject matter of counseling. This general definition recognizes the fact that students at most Christian universities have unique ideas about what Christian integration is. Consequently, the next items will help us answer two questions: What does Christian integration mean to you as a student? How satisfied are you with the Christian integration being done in your major? Since we suspect that there are many different opinions among the students, your perspective matters. Remember that this survey is anonymous so as to permit you to respond honestly.

What type of device are you using to take this survey?
- Tablet
- Laptop Computer
- Smart Phone, iPhones, etc.
- On-campus computer
- Desktop computer

How important are the following indicators of Christian integration to you in your academic major? After rating an item’s importance, please rate how satisfied you are with how your major’s department has practiced the specific item. **IF USING HAND HELD DEVICE BE SURE TO SCROLL TO THE RIGHT TO SEE “IMPORTANCE” RESPONSE OPTIONS FOLLOWED BY “SATISFACTION” RESPONSE OPTIONS.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Among the Least</td>
<td>Very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Among the Most</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Very</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Including case studies in my courses related to integration
- Comparing and contrasting a biblical truth with a corresponding truth from my discipline
- Professors’ discussion board interactions with students
- Applying biblical principles to “real life” situations that can occur in the jobs related to the academic discipline I study
- Video demonstrations of integration techniques
- Having classmates that are actively practicing their faith

In considering all the reasons I chose to attend this university, Christian integration is __________.
- not important at all
- somewhat unimportant
- neither important or unimportant
- an important reason
- the most important reason
Second ratings set, reminder instructions: How important are the following indicators of Christian integration to you in your academic major? After rating an item's importance, please rate how satisfied you are with how your major’s department has practiced the specific item. IF USING HAND HELD DEVICES BE SURE TO SCROLL TO THE RIGHT TO SEE “IMPORTANCE” RESPONSE OPTIONS FOLLOWED BY “SATISFACTION” RESPONSE OPTIONS===>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Center (Prayer request &amp; praise report discussion area)</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing PowerPoint/PortCast presentations on integration-related material</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in integration-related research leading to conference presentations that promote a Christian worldview</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors spending time interacting online with students in matters unrelated to course content but important to the students</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors displaying godly character</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors having a firm commitment to Christian beliefs</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life

- Not at all true of me
- Somewhat true of me
- Moderately true of me
- Mostly true of me
- Totally true of me

Third ratings set, reminder instructions: How important are the following indicators of Christian integration to you in your academic major? After rating an item’s importance, please rate how satisfied you are with how your major’s department has practiced the item. IF USING HAND HELD DEVICES BE SURE TO SCROLL TO THE RIGHT TO SEE “IMPORTANCE” RESPONSE OPTIONS FOLLOWED BY “SATISFACTION” RESPONSE OPTIONS===>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professors teaching appropriate Christian practices, interventions, or techniques that are relevant to my major.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting with professors during intensive classes (e.g., COUIN 509, 512, 567)</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors caring about their students' personal lives in addition to students' class work</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors sharing their family life experiences with their students.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned readings specific to integration</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors interacting with students around prayer requests</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors posting or emailing a devotional thought</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating my major's theories from a Christian worldview.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Importance and Satisfaction Ratings" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation, or Bible study?

- More than once a day
- Daily
- Two or more times per week
- Once a week
- Two or more times a month
- Rarely or never

The following question lists the aspects of the program that you rated as "Among the Most Important" in integration in your studies. Please select your top five choices from the list below:
Of your 5 top choices, choose your top three.

Finally, of your top three choices, please select your number one choice.

Currently, please rank in order the formats you have liked the best in receiving integration instruction for your online classes, with 1 being the most liked to 6 being the least liked.

- PowerPoint/PointCast Lectures
- Announcements
- Discussion Boards
- Individual email interactions with the professor
- Integration-related therapy case example videos
- Course Texts or articles

Please rate how well you have liked the formats for receiving integration instruction for your online classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Dislike a great deal</th>
<th>Dislike somewhat</th>
<th>Neither like nor dislike</th>
<th>Like somewhat</th>
<th>Like a great deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PowerPoint/PointCast Lectures</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual email interactions with the professor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Texts or articles</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration-related therapy case example videos</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the future, please rank in order the following formats you would like to see additional online integration instruction, with 1 being your most desired increase to 7 being your least desired increase.

- Announcements
- Face-to-Face interactions online (Video chat, etc.)
- Integration-related therapy case example videos
- Discussion Boards
- Course Textbooks or articles
- Individual email interactions with the professor
- PowerPoint/PointCast Lectures

Please let us know how satisfied you are with your major or degree program in the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The overall quality of Christian integration in your major.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your relationships with your professors in your major.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your relationships with your peers in your major.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of your spiritual growth from online classes in your major.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is your current program of study at Liberty University?
- Master of Arts in Professional Counseling
- Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy
- Master of Arts in Human Services
- Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling
- Other

How many courses have you completed in your degree program?

Have you ever attended an on-campus intensive at Liberty University (for example, COUN 505, Counseling Skills and Techniques)?
- Yes
- No

Which of the following counseling courses have you taken? Please check all that apply
- COUN 500 Orient. to Counselor Profession Identity & Function
- COUN 501 Ethical & Legal Issues in Counseling
- COUN 502 Human Growth & Development
- COUN 504 Multicultural Counseling
- COUN 505 Counseling Techniques & the Helping Relationship
- COUN 506 Integration of Spirituality & Counseling
- COUN 507 Theology and Spirituality in Counseling
- COUN 510 Theories of Counseling
- COUN 512 Group Counseling
- COUN 521 Research and Program Evaluation
- COUN 522 Career Counseling
- COUN 601 Marriage & Family Counseling I
- COUN 602 Marriage & Family Counseling II
- COUN 603 Pre-Marital and Marital Counseling
- COUN 604 Crisis Counseling
- COUN 610 Human Sexuality
- COUN 611 Counseling Children and Their Families
- COUN 620 Counseling the Adolescent
- COUN 848 Psychopathology & Counseling
- COUN 657 Clinical Diagnosis & Treatment Planning
- COUN 691 Substance Abuse: Diagnosis, Treatment & Prevention
- COUN 711 Diagnosis and Treatment of Addictive Behaviors
- COUN 898/598 Practicum
- COUN 699 Internship

What year were you born?

What is your gender?
- Male
- Female
What is your race?

- White/Caucasian
- African American
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Native American
- Pacific Islander
- Other

My religious denomination is:

- Baptist
- Charismatic/Pentecostal
- Episcopal
- Lutheran
- Methodist
- Presbyterian
- Non-denominational
- Catholic
- Other
Dear Counseling Students,

I am writing you as a student in the Ph.D. program in the Department of Counselor Education and Family Studies here at Liberty University. I am requesting your help as a part of conducting my dissertation research as part of the degree requirements. The purpose of this study is to determine what students in an online master’s level counseling program find the most important in learning integration in their program, as well as their satisfaction with learning integration.

You are invited to be a possible participant because you are currently enrolled as a student in one of the licensure counseling programs at Liberty University. To participate, click the link at the bottom of this email to begin. You will be presented with a consent form and will be given the opportunity to consent to participate. You will then be asked to rate the importance of and satisfaction with different aspects of your learning as they relate to the integration of counseling and your faith. You will also be asked some general questions related to spirituality and integration. This procedure should take approximately 10 minutes.

Results from this survey will help to produce useful information for Christian counselor education programs on how students best learn integration, particularly in an online environment.

Your answers are completely confidential and anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be required. A consent document will be placed at the beginning of the survey. The consent document contains additional information about my research. You will click on the “agree” button at the end of the consent information to indicate that you have read the document and would like to take part in the survey.

As a token of appreciation for your participation, you will be invited to enter a drawing for one of three $25 Barnes and Noble gift cards. Entering the drawing will be done separately from the survey, so your responses on the survey will not be linked with your drawing entry.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at phone number or email address.

Click here to participate https://liberty.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0AiCAwc3v6pFfhP

Thank you very much for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Kevin Van Wynsberg, M.A., Principle Investigator
APPENDIX D: Reminder Letter

Second Contact – Reminder email one week after first contact

Dear Students,

Last week you were invited to participate in a survey about master’s level counseling students’ perceptions on integration. This is a reminder that the survey is open. Your opinion is important to the study and is completely anonymous. The survey is completed entirely online and takes only about 10 minutes to complete.

Additionally, after participating you will have the option to enter a drawing for one of three $25 Barnes and Noble gift cards. Entering the drawing will be done separately from the survey, so your responses on the survey will not be linked with your drawing entry.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at phone number or email address.

Click here to participate https://liberty.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0AiCAwc3v6pFfhP

Thank you very much for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,
Kevin Van Wynsberg, M.A., Principle Investigator
January 21, 2016

Kevin Van Wynsberg
IRB Exemption 2403.012116: Online Counseling Integration Survey

Dear Kevin,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
   (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

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Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971