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Article 67

In-Person and Computer-Mediated Distance Group Supervision: A Case Study

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The need for counselor educators and supervisors to provide sufficient training experiences for distance learners has increased in recent years. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) now requires that counseling programs provide technical support that contributes to students" scholarly and professional development (CACREP, 2009, Standard I.F). Although several scholars have proposed models that educators can implement for supervision of distance learners (Dudding & Justice, 2004; Rahman et al., 2006; Wetchler, Trepper, McCollum, & Nelson, 1993), Dudding (2006) suggested key variables have yet to be fully investigated. Counselor education programs have since experienced a proliferation of distance supervision models and development of a burgeoning technological infrastructure; however, literature documenting the experiences of students receiving this training has only recently begun to emerge.

To date, counselor educators have detected a number of contributions and limitations associated with distance supervision modalities. For instance, Rahman et al. (2006) noted supervisees receiving distance supervision regarded their experience as particularly useful for accessing expert consultation when working in remote areas. Additionally, participants noted distance supervision modality was associated with greater focus on training rather than service when compared to previous in-person experiences. Hurley and Hadden (2005) reported supervisees found the multiple sensory

(i.e., audio, visual, and text) aspect in a computer mediated distance supervision paradigm was useful for outlining supervisory content and documenting consultations. When working with students receiving distance supervision, Rodger and Brown (2000) detected that when supervisors were perceived as supportive, encouraging, and knowledgeable, other variables such as perceived isolation from their academic community and decreased support from peers were assuaged.

In light of contributions afforded by distance supervision practices, several limitations have been cited. Haberstroh (2009) asserted professional standards of ethics for conducting distance supervision during the educational process are presently underdeveloped. Furthermore, Haberstroh referenced literature (e.g., Clingerman & Bernard, 2004) suggesting that although supervisees typically reported sufficient self-reflection experiences within some distance supervision modalities, there was a decrease in amount of time addressing client issues. Hurley and Hadden (2005) also noted that technological preparations, including security issues and test trials of software and equipment were a noteworthy and time consuming obstacle associated with distance supervision. Bernard and Goodyear (2009) recently suggested the initial investment for equipment and access to technology resources are often costly monetary and training investments for some counseling departments and professionals.

Many discoveries made by aforementioned authors (Clingerman & Bernard, 2004; Hurley & Hadden, 2005; Rahman et al., 2006; Rodger & Brown, 2000) have been founded in a tradition of utilizing small sample sizes to identify phenomena associated with participating in distance supervision. Although scholars have established some valuable inroads for exploring, understanding, and improving practices of distance supervision with counseling students, one area that has not been sufficiently considered is perceptions of supervisory alliance by students receiving distance supervision when compared to those simultaneously receiving in-person supervision. This is curious given the extant literature available documenting the relationship of several variables in relation to supervisory alliance (see Graham & Pehrsson, 2008; Wester, Vogel, & Archer, 2004; White & Queener, 2003; Wood, 2005).

The purpose of this study was to explore perceptions of supervisory relationship quality among students concurrently receiving either in-person or distance clinical group supervision. Specifically, we implemented a mixed method single-case research design to identify and explore trends and perceptions of general experience with a hybrid supervision course (i.e., distance and in-person participation). We explored the following research questions:

1.) What are the differences in perceived rapport between students receiving group supervision in-person when compared to a student participating using a distance supervision medium?
2.) What are the differences in perceived client focus between students receiving group supervision in-person when compared to a student participating using a distance supervision medium?
3.) How do students perceive the overall experience of participating in a hybrid group supervision strategy that combines both in-person and distance supervision strategies?

Method

The coordinator of practicum and internship formulated a plan to meet the educational needs of a student whose spouse was transferred out of state. Research design focused on the internship plan and importance of examining key variables related to the internship experience.

Participants

Eight master"s-level counseling students (2 males) completing internship coursework in a CACREP accredited counseling program were solicited to participate in the investigation; none declined to participate. Participants were predominately Caucasian (N=5), two participants identified themselves as Hispanic/ Latino, and one identified as African American/ Black.

Of these eight, four participants completed all protocols in the study and are represented in the quantitative analysis, two Caucasians (1 male), a Hispanic/ Latino female, and an African American/ Black female. Participants were mostly young adults with a mean age of 32 years (SD= 11.2) who were completing their counseling internship experience. Seven participants attended all internship meetings (N=6) *in-person* on their home campus at a South Texas university; one participant (female of Caucasian ethnicity) completed all but the first internship meeting (N=5) using a computer-mediated distance supervision format.

Instrument

Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory. The Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory (SWAI; Efstation, Patton, & Kardash, 1990) was implemented with permission of the American Psychological Association. This instrument has been used to evaluate the nature and strength of the supervisory relationship during graduate training (Graham & Pehrsson, 2008; Wester et al., 2004; White & Queener, 2003).

The SWAI has two versions, one completed by the student and another completed by the internship instructor. The supervisee evaluates perceptions of the working alliance between self and supervisor as measured by two subscales: Rapport and Client Focus. Efstation et al. (1990) submitted the 12-item Rapport scale as a measure of the relational connection perceived in the supervisory context via the support and motivation received from supervisors (e.g., "My supervisor helps me talk freely in our sessions"). The Client Focus scale has been identified as a 6-item measure of the degree to which a supervisee perceives interactions with their supervisor as helpful in developing understanding of client issues and dynamics for meeting treatment objectives (e.g., "My supervisor encourages me to take time to understand what the client is saying and doing). Efstation et al. reported Chronbach"s alpha reliability coefficients for Rapport and Client Focus scales of .90 and .77 respectively.

The supervisor form of the SWAI yields a measure of identification in addition to rapport and client focus. Rapport and Client Focus reliability coefficients were reported as .73 and .71 respectively. The identification subscale is intended to measure the degree to which the supervisor perceives he/she and the supervisee identify with one another (e.g., "My supervisee understands client behavior and treatment techniques similar to the way I do").

Procedure

We implemented a basic A-B design which utilized a single baseline measurement (A) and treatment condition during which several repeated measurements of the supervisory working alliance were collected (B). This A-B strategy has been regarded by several researchers as appropriate for making observations of phenomena in educational settings (Lundervold & Belwood, 2000; O'Neill, McDonnell, Billingsley, & Jenson, 2011; Ray, Minton, Schottelkorb, & Brown, 2010). The case under investigation was a class of students who agreed to document ratings of the supervisory alliance and reflections about experiences in a hybrid classroom. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) noted that "a major advantage of mixed methods research is that it enables researchers to simultaneously answer confirmatory and exploratory questions and therefore, verify and generate theory in the same study" (p. 15). When using single case design methodology, participant recruitment needs are minimal (Lundervold & Belwood, 2000; Patton, 2002; Ray, et al., 2010) and the number of participants in this study (N=8) was regarded as sufficient.

After receiving approval from the university's Institutional Review Board, students enrolled in an intensive six session summer internship class were informed during their first meeting that one peer would be completing the applied practice experience abroad and engaging in group supervision using a secure, web-based communication facilitated by the course instructor (second author). Students were informed that the instructor and a doctoral student (first author) were interested in investigating how the supervisory alliance may be influenced while using this unique instructional design. Although they were required by course objectives to complete both the SWAI and the reflective journal entries as part of regular educational practices, their participation in the study was voluntary and confidential. Non-participation would not affect their course standing in that the instructor would be unaware of student participation until grades had been submitted. Furthermore, students were assured that only those who elected to participate would have their inventories, journal entries, and contributions to a focus group included in data analysis. Students were provided an opportunity to ask questions.

Following this recruitment proposal, the instructor left the room and the first author completed informed consent and demographic protocols with participants. All participants were required to provide a pseudonym to assure anonymity during the semester. During the first class meeting, all eight students received in-person group supervision and completed their first SWAI protocol providing an initial baseline measurement of Rapport and Client Focus. During the next five internship classes, group supervision was conducted with one participant contributing through a secure, web-based videoconferencing carrier (MegaMeeting.com) while others participated in-person with the supervisor on their home campus. The distance communication provider allowed the on-line supervisee to interact with the group using real time audio and visual technology resources available through the university. At the conclusion of each class, supervisor and learners made journal entries in response to prompts. The instructor collected journal entries and left the room, leaving participants time to complete the SWAI. Inventories were collected by a class volunteer, sealed in an envelope and provided to the first author. Although these repeated measurements may seem excessive, Ray et al. (2010), noted "continual assessment is vital to single-case design because multiple data points provide

the data from which a participant's baseline and intervention phases are analyzed to assess change" (p. 196).

Data Analysis

Creswell (2003) suggested triangulation can begin with concurrently collected qualitative and quantitative data. Although collected concurrently, visual analysis and coding of participant journals were analyzed separately. The results of each were later combined and/or compared against one another by the researchers.

Quantitative. Demographic data was compiled and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Participant ratings on the SWAI were subjected to scoring protocol provided by the instrument"s authors, represented on graphs, and subjected to visual analysis of data. When evaluating results of a single subject design, visual analysis has been regarded as a preferred method of evaluating results of an intervention when compared to other measures such as effect size (Lundervold & Belwood, 2000; O"Neill et al., 2011; Ray et al., 2010). Because of reliance on consistent and repeated measurement embraced by single subject researchers, only participants who completed all hybrid sessions were included in quantitative analysis.

To demonstrate differential perceptions of Rapport between the student participating in group supervision using a distance medium and those completing course requirements in-person, the distance learner"s ratings on the SWAI were compared to the 3 students who completed all course meetings using the hybrid paradigm (Figure 1). A similar display was created to evaluate differential perceptions regarding Client Focus (Figure 1). Dash marks were included on the graphical representations to denote separation between initial baseline measurements (all students receiving in-person supervision) and subsequent treatment condition (students participating in a hybrid course). Following, the trend and variability of the data points representing participants" perceptions of SWAI domains were evaluated.

In addition to general visual analysis of data, participant ratings on Rapport and Client Focus subscales were subjected to analysis using the percentage of non-overlapping data (PND) procedure and are represented in Figures 2 and 3. Several authors (Lundervold & Belwood, 2000; O"Neill et al., 2011; Schottelkorb & Ray, 2009; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2001) have cited the utility of calculating the percentage of data points in the treatment phase that exceed a noteworthy value in the baseline phase. Schottelkorb and Ray (2009) mentioned that deciding whether data above or below the identified baseline point should be used is contingent upon objectives of the intervention. In this case, one goal of internship supervision experience is for the student to experience increased rapport and client focus with their supervisor. Therefore, to calculate PND, each participant"s baseline measurement functioned as a unique anchor to determine impact of a hybrid group supervision modality on perception of supervisory working alliance. Total amount of data points above the PND line was divided by total number of observations (N=5) and then multiplied by 100. When interpreting PND values, Scruggs and Mastropieri (2001) suggested PND scores greater than 90% represent very effective treatments, scores ranging from 70 to 90% represent effective treatments, scores from 50 to 70% are debatable, and scores below 50% should be regarded as ineffective.

Qualitative. Journal entries were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). First, journals were identified for date with entries

from each class being marked with separate colors. The second and third authors then read all journal entries independently, highlighting passages or phrases of meaning and writing memos in the margins (Patton, 2002). They reread journal entries, made additional notations, and began to cut out passages placing them into categories using open coding. Once core categories were identified, passages within each category were reread and coded using distance education, client focus, and rapport as categories. Thus, initial categories may include participant reflections about distance education, client focus, and/or rapport. Field notes from a focus group were then analyzed and synthesized with information from the categories as researchers used axial coding to begin understanding the relationships within and among categories.

Results

Rapport

Visual analysis of participant ratings on the Rapport subscale of the SWAI are represented in Figure 1. Graphical representations indicate participants, regardless of distance or in-person modality of supervision, experienced increased perceptions of rapport with their supervisor. Furthermore, all participants" scores trended upward with very little variability of data points during the last hybrid class. This suggests that regardless of modality, supervisees reported increased relational connection within the supervisory context via support and motivation received from their supervisor. PND analysis of participant ratings on the Rapport subscale (Figure 2) confirmed this trend with 100% of participants reporting scores above their unique PND line. Given guidelines for interpreting efficacy of an intervention proposed by Scruggs and Mastropieri (2001), this finding suggests both distance and in-person modalities are very effective for establishing rapport within the supervisory context.

Client Focus

Evaluation of graphical data for participant ratings on the Client Focus subscale of the SWAI suggests participants who received supervision in-person perceived interactions with their supervisor as more helpful for developing their understanding of client issues and dynamics when compared to the distance learner. All client focused scores for participants receiving in-person supervision trended upward following the initial class session. Conversely, the participant receiving group supervision through a distance modality reported decreased perception of client focus following the initial class meeting. This participant"s scores were markedly lower when compared to her peers and show considerable variability from final data points reported by participants receiving in-person supervision.

PND analysis of participant ratings on the Client Focus subscale (Figure 3) confirmed this differential experience between participants receiving supervision using either an in-person or distance modality. Participants receiving supervision using an in-person modality reported increased perceptions of client focus when compared to their unique PND line either 100% (N=2) or 80% of the time following initial baseline assessment. When applying efficacy guidelines proposed by Scruggs and Mastropieri (2001), this finding suggests a hybrid model of group supervision is effective to very effective for developing supervisee perceptions of client focus for students receiving the

in-person modality. This was not the case for the supervisee participating in the distance modality who reported no data points above her unique PND line established during initial baseline assessment. This suggests a hybrid model was ineffective for developing perceptions of client focus for the supervisee participating in group supervision using distance technology.

Reflections From the Class

Analysis of class members" journals resulted in identification of several categories of meaning. These include staffing cases/client focus, connections/rapport, concern for the distance learner, technology, emotions, professional information, and the class. All data was included in the coding process.

Connections/rapport. This category was named connections during initial coding, and includes student observations about connections experienced in class as a whole. The second analysis reflected that all data in this grouping could be coded as rapport. Students emphasized the importance they placed on this dimension of the experience and commented about "being able to ask any questions," being able to "talk about concerns freely," and feeling "open, understood." One student indicated, "I appreciate when my supervisor asks me my thoughts on the case before jumping to theirs. This allows me to express my thoughts before they are merged with others." Yet another wrote, "Group supervision is the highlight of my week because I know I can come and get help and support." One student commented at length stating,

…the atmosphere in the room was so very supportive and we all seemed to be pulled together through each other"s cases. I felt an emotional high and support with the cases and the info that was given… I in particular was able to relax and share my thoughts without worry.

Staffing cases/client focus. In initial coding, this category was labeled staffing cases. The second coding revealed that, while client focus was present in other categories as well, this entire grouping could be coded client focus. This category of results concerns learners" identification of the importance of learning opportunities in dealing with client cases. Whether their own or another"s case, all students reported this was of primary value to them. One student wrote, "I feel that I am getting the input needed for my clients and am learning from the topics brought up by the supervisor and the other interns." Another indicated, "I think we do a good job of addressing everyone"s questions, cases, etc… the time flies by quickly because we cover so much…" A third student seemed to sum up the comments of others stating, "The length of time we have to consult with [the professor] and colleagues has been a well-needed time to staff cases, gather feedback, and/or share situations where we may be stuck."

Concern for the distance learner. Several students made journal entries expressing concern about the experience of the distance learner. One student confided about forgetting "that she is there until the professor asks for her contribution" while at the same time noting that "she doesn"t miss a beat!" Another student wrote about being "worried that we didn"t get to hear from her" and noted that "It is hard for her to jump in as fast as the people in the room." The same student indicated that it "helped with self control" and noticed that there is a "different way the person on the computer is addressed than the people in the room," indicating the need for "everyone in the room to take responsibility or open it up to hear when she wants to jump in." Yet another student

indicated the "desire to keep her involved and to hear her input" and wondered "if we miss out on [distance student's] input some because she is on video."

Technology. In every class, at least one student journaled about the use of the computer for supervision whether or not a prompt was given regarding technology. Several students expressed approval, suggesting "that this form of supervision be explored more to open distance opportunities for internship" and "accommodate distance learners in a safe and confidential way." Others described it as "remarkable" and "awesome." One student indicated that initially, "I was curious about just how they were going to pull this off, but that over time, it seemed very smooth, flawless, and completely cohesive to our group." The distance learner indicated, "I also thought that it would be more difficult to watch classmates' tapes and be able to connect with them but this was actually quite easy." Others were more explicit about their initial skepticism and the change over time in their views. One student stated,

> I actually have had a change with the distance process. At first I was a tad skeptical on how it was going to work and how it would affect supervision. Now I see the error of my thinking… It has been an invaluable experience and process that I would not change… I believe that understanding has come through this process that distance learning can be done and can be done well.

Emotions. This category was so labeled because it includes a variety of feelings expressed by students as they moved through the internship process toward professional life. This category, when examined according to date, reflected a move from more anxiety in the beginning of group supervision to more confidence at the end. While anxiety is mentioned by several students, other feelings are identified as well. Anxiety about technology was an issue for the distance learner, who indicated, "I was nervous because I really needed for this to work." In addition, this student noted that "at first it was intimidating to talk because I felt like an outsider. As the class went on, it almost felt like I was part of the classroom and group." Ultimately, this student indicated that,

> Now I feel much more comfortable about using the system although there is still a tinge of anxiety when I first log into the system… [and] when I try and interject because of the sound that the computer makes and I don't like to interrupt people and that is usually what happens but I am getting better at managing these feelings.

For this student, however, there was also being "excited about working in this type of work and excited to be working with various types of clients from different walks of life." Another student indicated being part of the group "relieves me of any anxieties I may have had… coming to meet with my supervisor and colleagues allows me to feel like I am not alone…" Other students wrote about being "overwhelmed" as they considered issues they will confront post-graduation and expressed that excitement accompanies some of their fears. One student noted the "change of attitude that has come along with the internship title… more freedom in therapy with clients and my interactions with supervisors is much different than what I previously had." This student reflected that the "positive shift in attitude from supervisors has spurred me on more professionally and given me more confidence towards my input and counseling sessions."

Professional information. This category includes student comments about a variety of professional issues and information discussed in group supervision. All students commented on professional issues discussed, including billing practices, insurance forms, social networking, and topics related to the business of doing counseling, with one learner writing that such discussion "was an eye opener." One student noted "the large amount of „things" that are involved in counseling… diagnosis for insurance purposes, paperwork, how much actual counseling one does aside from their collateral duties." Another stated, "I definitely appreciated the reality about what we should expect…" Also included in this category were student comments about professional issues such as ethical dilemmas, legislative impact on counseling practice, and advocacy on behalf of the profession as well as clients.

The class. This final category includes comments learners made about the group supervision class as a whole. Observations included wanting more or less information about the syllabus or expressing dislike of journaling. Other comments referred to their own development as pointed out by one student who expressed, "Thank you for helping me understand the in betweens of counseling." Another indicated, "I feel that all that we have explored today was beneficial to my professional development as a counselor." A third student wrote, "I believe that this has been a time of preparation for what is to come." One student summed up the process of the class by saying,

> Internship in this particular class is all meaningful learning from the understanding of privacy, how to be a part of the community in a respectful way. These little areas are actually quite significant to our learning throughout the counseling process.

Reflections From the Instructor

"It shouldn"t be this hard!" This was one of the first comments in my reflective journal, written as the distance learner and I were trying to get all the necessary technology and approvals in place. The frustrations and difficulty of setting up a distance supervision process that would protect client and student confidentiality and would observe all FERPA and HIPAA requirements seemed incredible and unnecessary to me in an era where so much is done electronically. The distance student researched and located a service that provided the protections needed; however, ensuring there was no service already available within the university that would provide the same level of protection, as well as university vetting of the service, required coordination among the instructor, university IT staff, the distance learner, and personnel from the company providing the service. Delays were frustrating for me and anxiety-producing for the student, as arrangements needed to be completed and approved before she moved out of state.

I made note that it was a huge benefit for the distance student to meet the first class in-person, as it seemed to set the stage for her to be part of the whole and for the rest of the class to see her that way. I was also aware that having the opportunity to play with the technology while she was still on site helped both of us be more comfortable. The second class meeting, nonetheless, brought a few technical problems, and I wrote about my efforts to allay her anxiety, normalize the use of the technology for all the students, and create an inclusive atmosphere. Another student also brought a laptop and signed into the distance learner"s meeting, which seemed to impact the atmosphere in the room. We could see the distance learner from two places in the classroom, and the

distance learner was able to see the class from two different vantage points. The second laptop remained throughout the semester.

"Okay, that"s not a computer screen. That"s [the student]." As the weeks progressed, I was aware of always being alert to the distance learner and watching her on screen to be sure I noticed when she wanted to speak, as it was more difficult for her to jump into case discussions. In the first two classes with technology in place, I noticed that a couple of students automatically specifically included the distance learner in the conversation and asked directly for her input, while others seemed to almost forget she was there unless she spoke. As a result, I both intentionally modeled active inclusion of all students and verbally encouraged students to seek feedback from each other. My observation over the next several weeks was that the class as a whole became a very interactive and cohesive group, including the distance student. I also noted, however, the distance learner tended to hold back comments until she had all her thoughts in order, something she verified when asked about my perception of what was occurring. I also wrote, and students commented, about how small her image was on the computer screens. The options were having her larger than life by projecting her on the wall, and having her be very small, about 1/6 the size of the computer screen. The distance learner did not want to be larger than life.

"This group is amazing." One of the things I noted throughout my journal was the unusually high cohesion and sense of rapport in the class. Therapeutic alliance is of major importance to me as a clinician, and I always work to model it in the supervisory relationship. With this group, however, the cohesion and alliance among all of us was something that I wrote about and that students commented on in class.

"Uh-oh. I didn"t plan for that." I was concerned because, while the distance student was able to hear and/or see the tapes played in class, we were unable to hear her audio tapes well enough to listen to her tapes from her locale and give the same kind of immediate feedback available to other students. Instead, she had to ship her work to me. She could and did present cases orally, but the audio and video presentations made throughout the semester by other students were not possible for her. I wondered in my journal whether she was getting sufficient feedback from me and the class without having her tapes in the class.

In retrospect, it was curious to me that I was not anxious about the distance supervision, per se. I knew the distance learner and previously had ample opportunities to observe her work live. I wondered whether I would be willing to do this with a student I did not know or had not seen work. Following the class, I also considered what I would do differently if I had a similar supervision circumstance.

Discussion

Perceptions of Rapport with the participants" supervisor were maintained regardless of the whether the student received supervision in-person or using a distance modality. This is heartening in light of findings by Rodger and Brown (2000) who suggested that when supervisors are perceived as supportive, encouraging, and knowledgeable by their supervisees receiving distance supervision, some degree of isolation and frustration is allayed. Qualitative data extended this understanding more and noted that the rapport reported by supervisees in this study was not just solely with their

supervisor, but a collective rapport that positively influenced their overall group supervision experience.

The differential perceptions of Client Focus were also among the more poignant discoveries of our study. Consistent with literature presented by some authors (Clingerman & Bernard, 2004; Haberstroh, 2009), a trend was confirmed in both the SWAI and reflective journals suggesting that fostering a supervisee receiving distance supervision‟s sense of client focus is a persisting challenge for supervisors. The reflective journals from the instructor and in-class participants illustrated a concern that the distance learner might not be getting as much attention to her cases as she would if she were present. While not reflected in her journal, this concern was validated by the results of her SWAI which indicated a consistent decline following separation from the in-person format.

The qualitative portion of the study resulted in categories that might be expected in an examination of any supervision group. The use of distance supervision with one learner, however, provided some categories that were infused with thick description of learners‟ experiences about using this modality. Student learners as well as the instructor indicated a strong sense of community and rapport, one indicator of strong supervisory working alliance. Several factors may have played a role in the strength of rapport. First, most of the students knew each other, and several had participated in a previous group supervision course with the same instructor. Second, the distance learner attended the first supervision session in-person, thus establishing herself as a member of the group. Third, both in-person learners and the instructor expressed concern in their journals that the distance learner feel/be included, so the attention of multiple people was focused on achieving this goal. Finally, the instructor was mindful of increased need for creating a sense of inclusion and community with this group setup, and directly addressed and modeled behaviors to encourage a sense of belonging.

Learners in the classroom were quick to adapt to the use of technology for supervision, and most indicated they would like to see such use expanded. The distance learner‟s experience was different, however, and she expressed gratitude and surprise that it worked so well and at the same time indicated her preference for being in the room with others. This is consistent with the suggestion by Hurley and Hadden (2005) that managing technology can take away from practicing supervision. It is uncertain whether her experience would have been different if it had been easier to jump into discussion without delays inherent in the system and to have tapes be discussed in class in a timely way. It is also unclear whether those students who sometimes overlooked her presence would have found it easier if her image could have been projected on a full screen, something that was not possible with the service being used. From the perspective of the instructor, the use of technology and its attendant quirks necessitated continual attention to being sure the distance learner‟s voice was heard. This strategy was experienced by the instructor as requiring a more deliberate and focused kind of attention than is required using in-person interaction.

We propose that the findings of this study may encourage counselor educators to pay particular attention to issues of client focus even when things appear to be going well. Second, supervisors considering use of this hybrid mode of supervision should be aware of the potentially high cost to either department or student for establishing a secure technological method for engaging in distance supervision. Third, educators and

supervisors should anticipate the variety of complications with technology and plan for an alternative means for student inclusion in the case of signals failure, university policy, and other variables. Fourth, the supervisor should take care to deliberately model and encourage a sense of community and inclusion being mindful that attention to different details may be important when working with students via technology. Finally, providing a hybrid modality for supervision can stretch a department"s academic community across state lines; however, advancement in practice is needed to assure the integrity of the training experience.

Conclusion

This study provides an initial understanding of the experience of one instructor and eight students involved in group supervision where both in-person and computer-mediated distance strategies were implemented. Any conclusions should be considered within the parameters of the design. Our project highlights the need for further exploration of distance education supervision during practicum and internship in order to gain deeper understanding of this new and unique process. As noted by Dudding (2006), several variables remain to be identified and explored in relation to distance and hybrid models of group supervision. Our findings indicate that although rapport may be readily cultivated within distance supervision mediums, there is evidence to suggest that decreased perceptions of client focus may have a deleterious impact on the supervisory experience. We propose that the findings of this study inform counselor supervisors to attend to issues associated with client focus when providing supervisory services using a distance modality. Furthermore, in addition to further investigation and verification of our findings, researchers may be assisted by the development of a measurement apparatus that is intended to assess the supervisory working alliance within the group setting.

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Find more information on the project at: http://counselingoutfitters.com/vistas/VISTAS_Home.htm

Figure 1.

Graphical representation of trends bewteen particpants for measures of Rapport and Client Focus with supervisor.
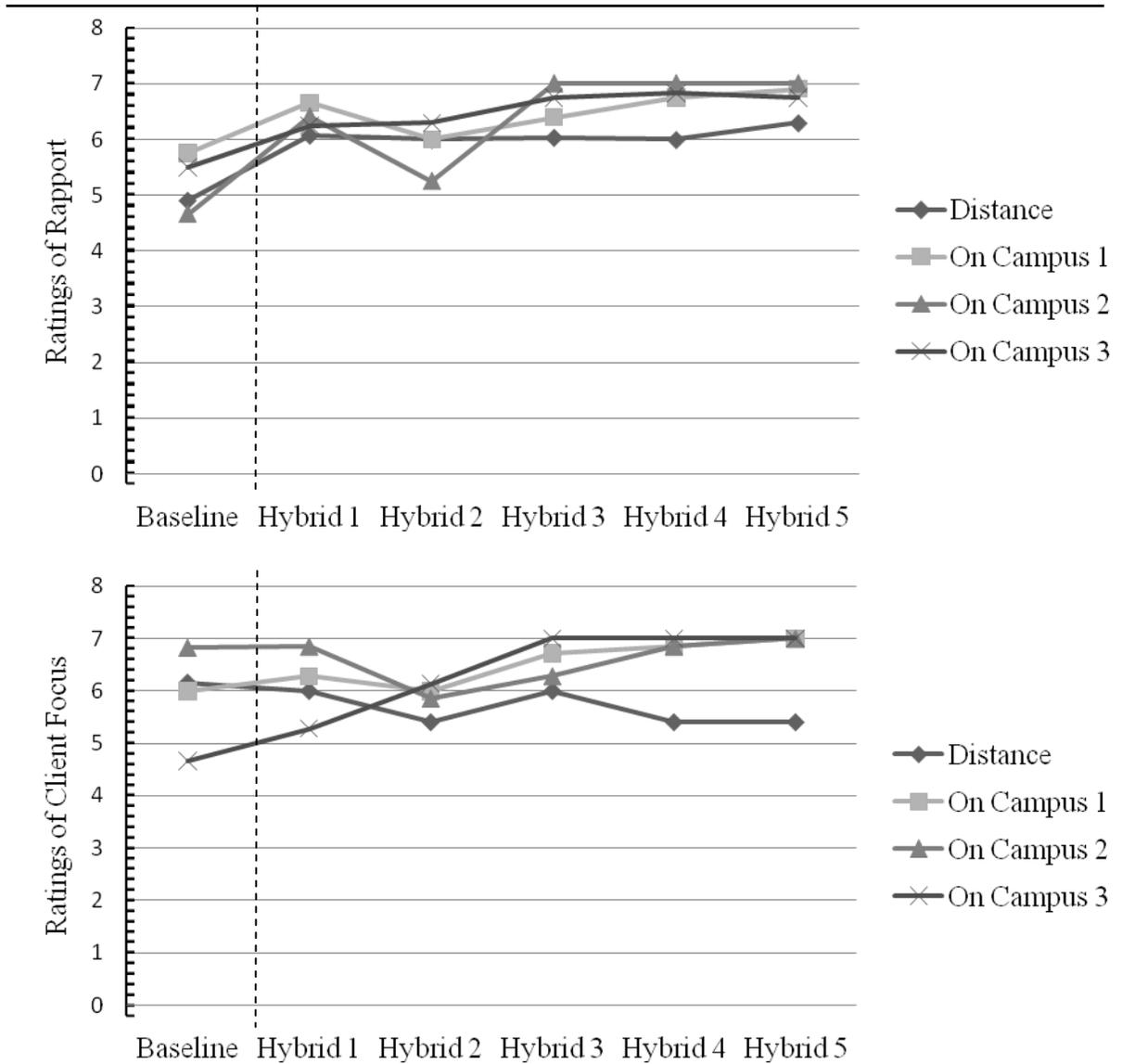
Figure 2.
Graphical representation of percentage of non-overlapping data for ratings of Rapport with supervisor by participants engaging in distance and on campus supervision.
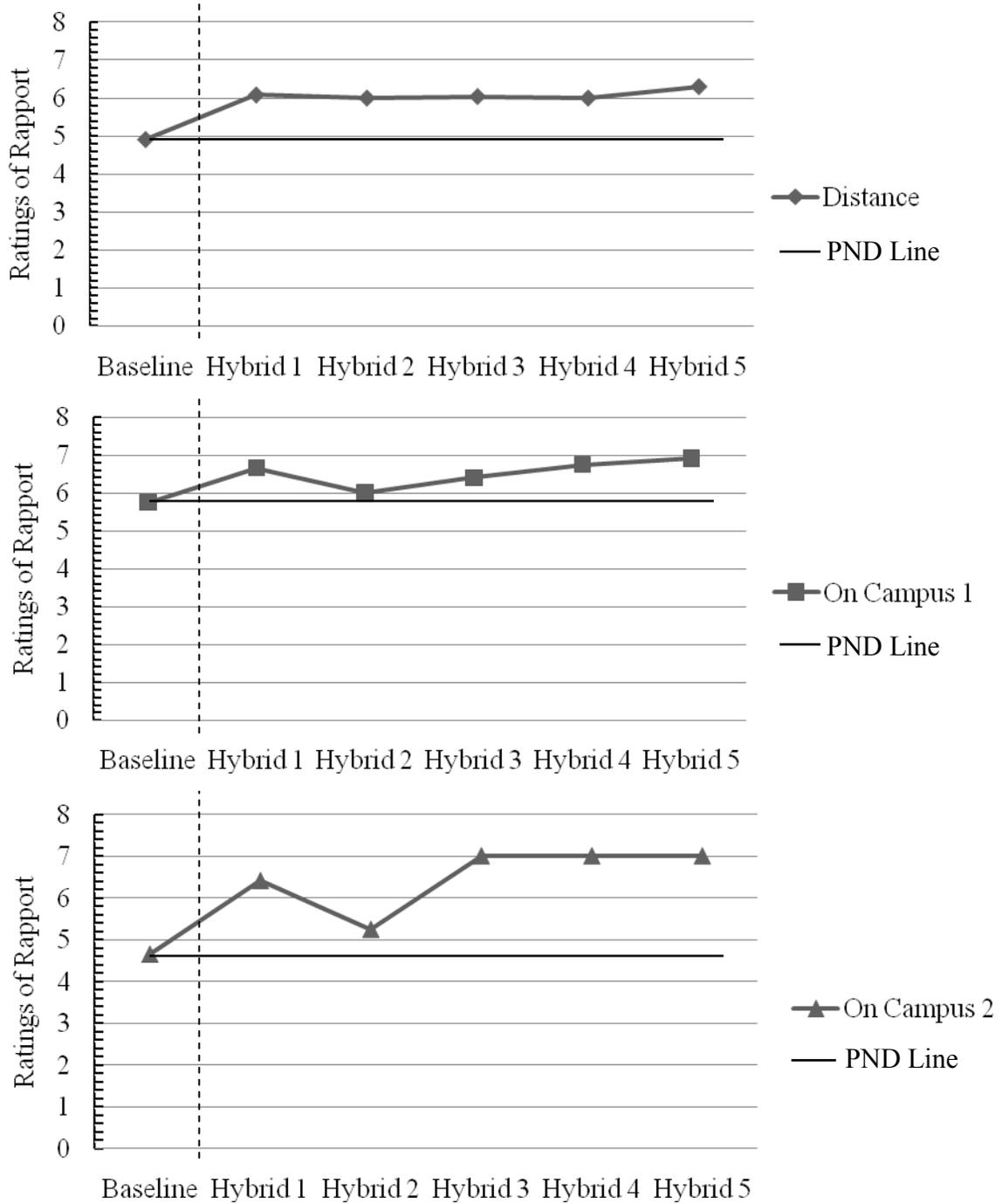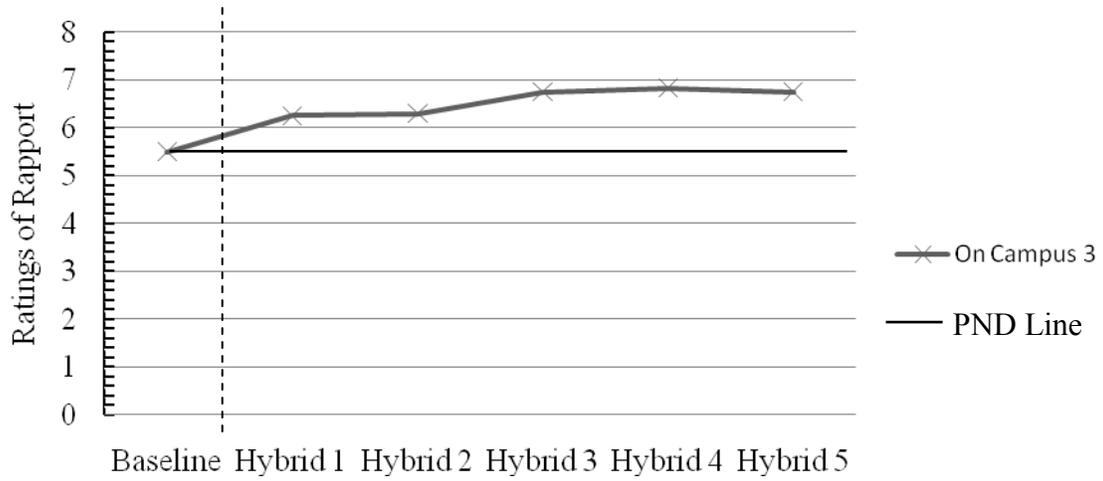
Figure 2. (cont).
Graphical representation of percentage of non-overlapping data for ratings of Rapport with supervisor by participants engaging in distance and on campus supervision.

Figure 3.
Graphical representation of percentage of non-overlapping data for ratings of Client Focus with supervisor by participants engaging in distance and on campus supervision.
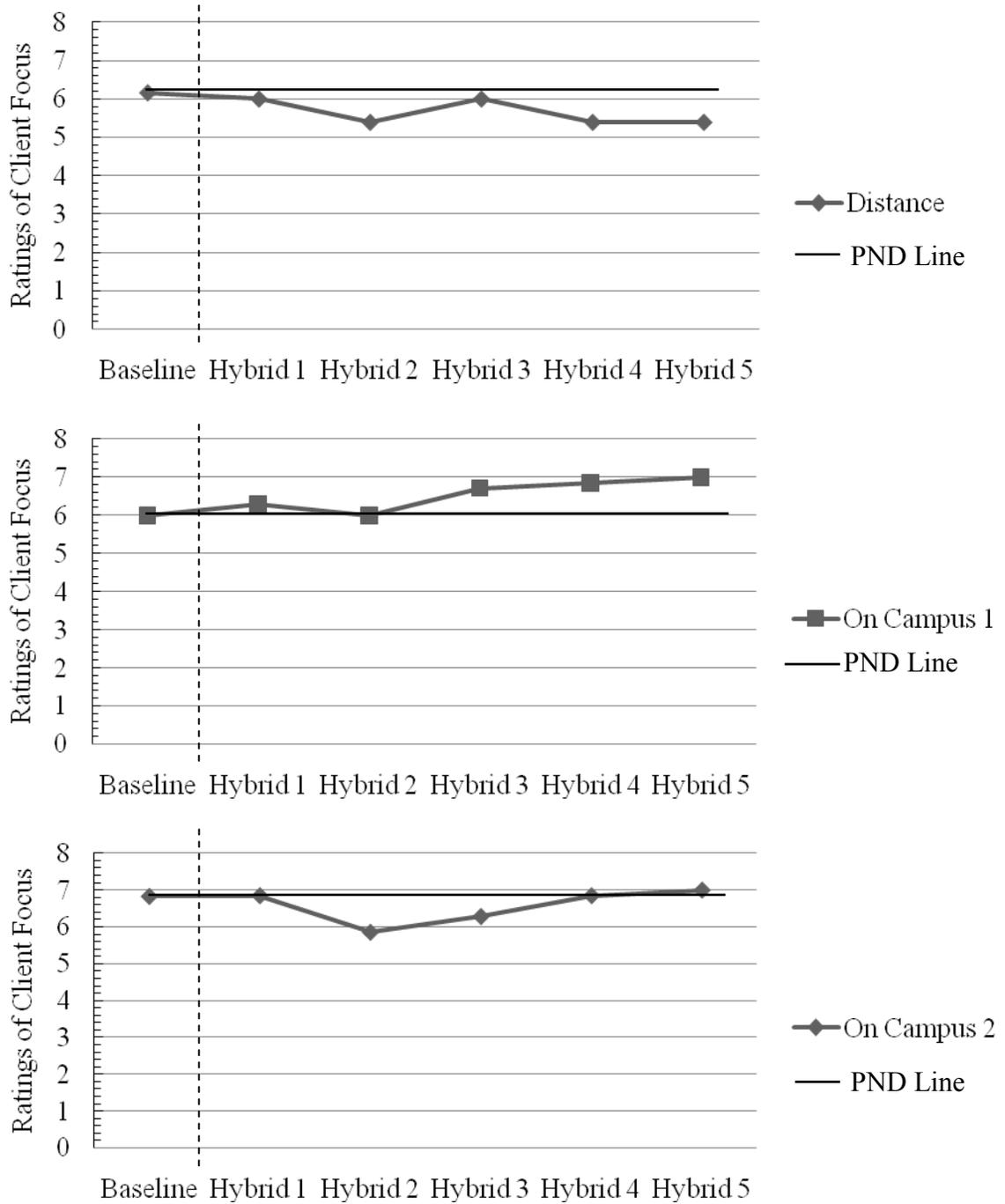
Figure 3. (cont.)
Graphical representation of percentage of non-overlapping data for ratings of Client
Focus with supervisor by participants engaging in distance and on campus supervision.