

Pre-Intensive Reflection Assignment

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to explore the various aspects involved with teaching counseling education. Some of the definitive strategies or unique approaches that exist are discussed and attention is given to implementation. Counselor education requires a certain skill set to integrate clinical counseling skills with knowledge, and effectively deliver this information in a manner that utilizes a student's past experiences to keep them engaged, motivated and inspired to research and contribute to the existing body of literature. In this paper, I will address the utility of technology, multiculturalism, andragogy, and the specific inner workings of lectures, and assessments. Teaching counselor educators effectively requires an awareness that is cultivated through curiosity, and knowledge.

Keywords: experiential learning, multiculturalism, counseling skills

Describes the roles and responsibilities related to educating counselors

Counselor Education can be regarded as requiring the highest level on Bloom's Taxonomy: an integrative and creative approach to bringing your counseling skills to the class. The ideal goal is to model counseling skills to your students while delivering content (West et al., 2013 p.25). Traditional teaching employs a teacher and student relationship, however in educating counselors the soft skills of empathy, creating safety and providing similar experiences to what is observed in the counseling room is critical. From the creation of a warm syllabi (W, 14-15) to listening to your inner voice and trusting your intuition about the meaningful ways to provide educational instruction (W, 6).

A major role that resonates with me is continuous evaluation. To ensure that through intentionality, all resources and efforts are yielding the desired outcome (W, 134). Evaluation becomes an easier task when proper planning has occurred. Following a timeline for planning your course can provide the explicit clarity that is needed (McKeachie et al., 2014, p. 6). The suggested outline in chapter three is a great way to map out the course from up to three months before the course begins. Students, particularly adult students have busy lives and other class schedules, thus being properly prepared helps both teachers and students avoid wasting time.

The underpinnings of counselor education include transitioning the counselor beyond the clinician role and prepare them for an active professional life that encompasses leadership roles, contributors to the expanding body of knowledge, and an effective educator to continue this meaningful profession. This is what I would consider the bigger, overall picture for counselor educators (W, 123).

Discusses pedagogy and teaching methods relevant to counselor education

Lectures have been around a really long time and provides several benefits including the ability to present information from a variety of sources while highlighting the critical concepts, and ideas (M, 59). Informal lecture (W,26) – remains the dominant instructional method in higher education as it is time - efficient, and an effective way of introducing students to the material before engaging in more active learning (W, 27). The use of seminars is also a great tool for adult learners because it focuses more on discussion which requires more activity from the students (W, 37).

Welcoming the students (W, 33) – the teacher's empathy fosters a sense of safety and belonging. Earlier than the course begins, it is suggested to send out a welcome letter to the future students of that class. This can set the stage for an amicable atmosphere and begins the process of creating safety. This connection further encourages the student's commitment to a career in counseling. In the counseling room, the client and counselor build rapport and utilize this sense of trust to overcome obstacles. In the same manner, Counselor Educators must concentrate on interpersonal reciprocity (W, 28).

Discussion and assigned readings are powerful tools to facilitate adult learning. Adults, value experiential learning and bringing their experiences to the table; hence discussions are effective ways to encourage students to practice integrating what they already know with current, new information (M, 39). The importance of reading in graduate school can largely be undervalued by students. However, this is an extremely important component of educating counselors as the practice of active reading, consumption of knowledge, conducting research and writing articles expands the knowledge base of both the counselor and the profession.

Describes models of adult developing and learning

Adult learners are interested in understanding concepts, principles, and application. Although not exclusive, most graduate and post-graduate students will be adult learners, therefore it is extremely important to understand what styles of learning is most effective. Andragogy describes the way that adults learn which differs from pedagogy that refers to the way that children learn. Adults bring their past experiences to the classroom, and are strongly motivated to connect new content with previous knowledge thus creating new meanings. Experiential learning places much emphasis on doing; activities such as role-playing therapeutic techniques, active discussions on cases, and in-class simulations all serve as key factors in adult education (W, 52). Oftentimes, the teacher functions more as a facilitator than an instructor because adults want to get involved and take an active role in their educational goals (W, 53).

Additionally, the experiential component is most effective when accompanied by a reflective process. The goal is to bridge the gap between theory and practical (W, 54). When students experience emotions, the reflective process helps them to sort things out and potentially make new decisions, or choices about their experiences. Reflections complete the “loop” of learning (W, 54). The enthusiasm felt during class ought to be carefully guided to ignite further study (W, 53). On a personal note, I am enjoying the process of learning as an adult; content has so much more meaning to me, and I feel as though I can truly interact with the literature and achieve a sense of satisfaction.

Discusses instructional and curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation methods relevant to counselor education

The main organizational tool in providing education is the syllabus. It provides structure and organization (W, 14) and serves as the agreement between instructor and student (W, 15). Syllabi should contain a schedule of all assignments, reading requirements, policies, and provide tips on how students can succeed in this course. In many cases the syllabi serve as the student's first introduction to the professor and the class (W, 16). The text even highlights that the presentation of the syllabus can promote student engagement, paying close attention to the font size and layout of the content (W, 18).

These useful tips help us to create the picture of how everything works together. When sorting out the technical bits and pieces, it is important to remember to make the syllabus a true reflection of yourself (W, 19). In the counseling room, authenticity is crucial and this aspect should be a part of who we are as educators. Whatever tone is set, will set the stage for student engagement and learning.

Technology tools (W, 81) – increase student learning, greater retention and improve student attitude. Technology also encourages students to take responsibility and ownership for their learning. When deciding which tools to utilize, it is helpful to remember that all technology should - augment pedagogical methods, be reasonably priced, be user-friendly and longevity (W, 83).

From a clinical perspective, I have always enjoyed Solution-Focused Brief Therapy. There is a simplicity found in emphasizing an individual's strengths, and providing evaluation from this approach gives a sense of congruence with the goals of counselor education (W, 143).

Specific skills including: compliments, empowering the student as an expert on themselves thus encouraging ownership for their own learning, and exceptions (highlighting the times when the problems are less noticeable).

Describes effective approaches for online instruction

When discussing approaches for online instruction the two broad categories include synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Most online programs utilize a combination of both components to provide comprehensive instruction (W, 101). Desktop Video Conferencing (DVC), allows for real-time interaction between faculty and students without students all needing to be in the same classroom (W, 99). Additional common factors of asynchronous instruction include discussion boards, email, and assessments (W, 102).

Articulating clear course objectives and goals can help to determine what online instruction can look like and how all parts can be combined for effective learning (M, 259). Oftentimes converting the course content to a virtual platform can be the most time-consuming. Regardless of the vehicle used to create online instruction there are some key elements that facilitate effective teaching and successful learning; planning, providing user support, interaction between faculty and student, and interaction between student and content (W, 105).

It is also important for educators to learn how to become a distance teacher. For example, having virtual office hours can allow for students to regularly interact with the professor and ask questions (W, 105). Connecting with other colleagues who have taught virtually is also helpful; when educators can observe others this can assist in being better prepared. (W, 103).

Face-to face interaction holds several benefits which educators must try to recreate in the online platform, giving accurate and timely feedback is critical to a student's progress (M, 260). As the challenge with time and space exists, students thrive on integral moments of interaction and development towards their professional goals.

Discusses screening, remediation, and gatekeeping functions relevant to teaching

An important task of educators is to require students to achieve and maintain the standard expected in the professional field. When students enter our classrooms, severe deficits need to be addressed. Through modeling counseling skills, we need to guide them toward resources that can promote skill development (M,176). Writing centers, or peer-tutoring can provide support for students and empower them to be responsible for their own learning (M, 176).

Study groups, and discussion posts featuring FAQ's can serve as resources for students. Oftentimes, a professor will invite a student to visit with them and work together to identify concerns. The "calibration of comprehension" works to help students understand the gap between their prediction of how well they did before a test, and the actual results of the test (M, 177). These are a few strategies that can assist remedial counselor educator students in a helpful and respectful manner.

Counselor educator students are expected to be well-versed scholars who represent high levels of expertise and professionalism. It is therefore the responsibility of the university to ensure that such students are well-regulated, and fully prepared to contribute to the ever-expanding profession. Educators are ultimately responsible for professional client care, and due diligence must be given to ensure that counselor educators have met the mark. Should a student begin to display questionable and/or worrisome behavior, it is best to intervene immediately and

secure help for and with the student. This level of care also cultivates a health student-teacher interaction which in turn can motivate the student to succeed (W, 136).

Describes assessment of learning

The field of counseling requires individuals to tolerate ambiguity; dichotomous thinking can often lead to less than desirable outcomes. Assessments in the counselor educator courses must carefully be designed to accurately indicate along several lines of professional development, how the student is progressing. The text helps to clarify that higher order skills are difficult to measure (M, 75), but planning towards this end is beneficial to both instructor and student.

A variety of assessments provides the students with an opportunity to demonstrate their levels of learning. Using a grid-type to ensure that all assessments evaluate a specific objective and allows the strengths and weaknesses of students to be observed can provide a balanced approach to this component. The term “triangulation of data” which refers to seeing the assessments from multiple perspectives (M, 74). Embedded assessments which include out of class activities can serve great purpose in providing information with student progression (M, 75). Some examples include: asking students to choose an article of their choice in class and write their reactions to it, or watching a video in class and noting internal responses and reactions (M, 75), role-playing, games, and case studies (M, 63). Traditional methods such as research papers, quizzes and tests are still considered useful, but the focus of assessments should always be to highlight learning and not simply earning a grade (M, 83).

It is helpful to remember that students all learn through different measurements and deserve a variety of avenues to display their development. I like the idea that assessment should

not be considered one or two grades, but rather a wholistic approach that incorporates as many ways to gain the knowledge that the student is progressing.

Discusses ethical and culturally relevant strategies used in counselor preparation

Multiculturalism has become a crucial topic in counseling; counselors are constantly reminded to stay culturally sensitive, become aware of their personal biases and interact with all clients in a respectful manner. As mentioned in (W, 25) modeling the concept to counselor educators while teaching the concept is both necessary and beneficial.

Ways to avoid cultural insensitivity include paying close attention to the language used when soliciting responses (M, 154), avoid making false assumptions regarding student's non-verbal body language (M,153), and make every effort to better understand all of the backgrounds your students may be coming from before they are described as "...not paying attention, lack of interest or boredom" (M, 153). Direct questioning could create a sense of disrespect if answered by a student whose culture deems direct answers as disrespectful. Broaching skills can be used to help counselor educator students explicitly discuss with their clients any concerns regarding, race and culture (W, 153). The idea encourages counselors to create the safe space and allow the clients to disclose what they will regarding their culture. This safety can single-handedly reduce psychological distress. It is necessary for counselor educators themselves to sit with their emotions, and biases before they can authentically be with their clients.

This topic is always highlighted to me because in several ways, I experience the feeling of being culturally aware on several levels. Within our learning cohort at Liberty University, I am often the only student from the Caribbean (The Bahamas), and within that context, my mother is Jamaican, and my husband is Welsh. Lots of different cultural interactions on a daily

basis, and I have observed the necessity of pausing to increase my awareness of any bias and respond authentically to cultural interactions.

Describes the Role of mentoring in counselor education

Throughout the texts, there are explicit messages that a strong commitment must be made to continuous learning, and utilizing the personhood of the teacher (M, 331 & W, 170). Great teachers have a secure personal identity and understand how this can be infused in the classroom (W, 170). McKeachie describes teaching as both "...and intellectual and social activity" (M, 332). This analogy perfectly articulates the delicate balance of challenging ourselves and our students to strive for more, and managing those goals within the context of staying connected and grounded to fully support each other through the development of higher cognitive skills (Mallott et al., 2014).

Research has provided information that humans have a natural inclination towards learning, in fact this is largely how humans have survived for so long (M, 331). Challenges often serve as a catalyst for curiosity (M, 331) and teaching provides a rich atmosphere for the exchange of ideas and information through group processes. A career as an educator is ideal because the possibilities for growth and development are never-ending, and with a keen sense of self-assessment, your development as a teacher will flourish (M, 332). As I prepare myself for the role of counselor educator, I want to create environments that foster curiosity in my students and myself, and strive to stay ignited in the pursuit of knowledge. The sense of accountability reminds me of the Bible verse Proverbs 27:17: As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Through receiving and providing mentorship in the counselor education process, we are then able to combine our shared experiences and thrive.

References

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REFLECTIVE JOURNAL GRADING RUBRIC

Criteria	Levels of Achievement			
at 70% ity	Advanced 45 to 41 points Shows high levels of evidence of comprehending course content and applicability to practice as a counselor educator.	Proficient 40 to 38 points Shows satisfactory evidence of comprehension of course content and applicability to practice as a counselor educator.	Developing 37 to 1 points Shows little evidence of comprehension of course content and applicability to practice as a counselor educator.	Not present 0 points
ity & ness	25 to 23 points Submitted on time, all sections have only 250-300 words, and points are cited in the truncated format provided. Grading Rubric-Self-Evaluation included.	22 to 21 points Submitted on time and all sections have only 250-300 words. Grading Rubric-Self-Evaluation included.	20 to 1 points Submitted after deadline, two or more sections have less than 250 words, or was not submitted at all	0 points
ture %	Advanced	Proficient	Developing	Not Present
ics & sition	15 to 14 points Paper is free of errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Writing style displays exceptional composition with all of the following elements: coherent, cohesive, effective sentence/paragraph structures, logical progression, and transitions.	13 points Few errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Clear writing style displaying basic composition with most of the following elements: coherent, cohesive, effective sentence/paragraph structures, logical progression, and transitions.	12 to 1 points Pervasive errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Writing includes pervasive errors in multiple categories: coherent, cohesive, effective sentence/paragraph structures, logical progression, and transitions.	0 points
	15 to 14 points Citations are appropriately implemented and are formatted per APA. All of the references are strong, legitimate academic sources and are correctly formatted per APA. Overall paper is formatted per APA: running head, page numbers, title page, spacing, indentions, margins, and headings.	13 points Minor errors regarding appropriate implementation and/or APA formatting of citations. Most references are from legitimate academic sources; few formatting errors according to APA. Few errors in paper format per APA: running head, page numbers, title page, spacing, indentions, margins, and headings.	12 to 1 points Pervasive errors regarding appropriate implementation and/or APA formatting of citations. Multiple references are from questionable sources; multiple formatting errors according to APA. Multiple errors in paper format per APA: running head, page numbers, title page, spacing, indentions, margins, and headings.	0 points

