ACES Teaching Initiative Taskforce
Best Practices in Teaching in Counselor Education
Report 2016
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Preface

The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) emphasizes the need for quality education and supervision of counselors in all work settings. Through the accreditation process and professional development activities, ACES strives to continue to improve the education, credentialing and supervision of counselors. The ultimate purpose of ACES-in accordance with the purpose of ACA-is to advance counselor education and supervision in order to improve the provision of counseling services in all settings of society.

In the spirit of advancing counselor education, the ACES leadership is committed to identifying, implementing, and evaluating pedagogical practices that optimize the learning and preparation of competent counselors, supervisors, and counselor educators. The need for an ACES Best Practices in Teaching Taskforce was identified in 2013, and the taskforce was launched in 2014.

The guiding charge to the Taskforce is to generate a set of best practice guidelines for teaching across work settings. The scope of the guidelines can be determined by the members of the Taskforce.

In response to the need for addressing best practices in teaching in the field of counselor education, ACES President Marty Jencius (2014-2015) initiated a taskforce with members representing the five different ACES regions. A call was made to ACES members as a part of a solicitation for service on various taskforces in the summer of 2014. By fall of 2014 regional ACES Presidents identified two representatives per region to become members of the taskforce. President Jencius requested Dr. Susannah M. Wood to chair the taskforce.

Starting in September of 2014 the taskforce began deliberations on how to create a “set of best practice guidelines” in answer to the charge. Throughout the subsequent academic year, the taskforce engaged in frequent conference calls, created subcommittees to examine specific issues, and exchanged ideas and resources.

By the beginning of 2015 the taskforce was confronted with the following realities:

1. **The concept of “best practice” can be ambiguous.** Considerations for what is “best” in practice generated discussions amongst members about what is “best” for learners, what is “best” for instructors, in what contexts and for what reasons. The taskforce must define what they interpret as “best practice.”

2. The scope of generating a specific set of best practices was an enormous undertaking because concepts that underpin acts of “teaching” in counselor education are borrowed extensively from other fields. Entire volumes have been written on teaching. The taskforce must narrow the scope of the charge and consider what the scope would mean for the final product or report.

3. **The concept of “teaching” has evolved over time and in response to contextual forces.** With the advent of technology-based platforms of communication, entire counselor education programs have gone “online” and generated a need for new ways to approach online teaching and learning. These approaches, too, may be borrowed from allied fields such as k-12 education, special education, and higher education. The taskforce must consider how to address how technology has influenced teaching in counselor education and how “best practices” must be considered with that lens.
4. Teaching in counselor education is also influenced by forces inside the profession, and by different cultures of universities and specific counselor preparation programs. The taskforce must address how daily realities of university mandates, program curriculum structure, and accreditation and licensure impact teaching in counselor education.

5. Although the charge emphasized teaching, the counterpart to the act of teaching is the act of learning. If guidelines for best practice are to be generated, the learner, or student must be at the forefront of discussions. How do faculty members know a student has learned, or mastered specific content or skills? How does that relate to the evaluation of the instructor in the classroom? Programs and instructors also are responsible for ensuring that their students can be the best counselors they can be. Remediation and gatekeeping are directly connected to the degree to which students have mastered knowledge and skills, can demonstrate ethical and effective practice, can accept and integrate constructive feedback, can demonstrate self-awareness, and can comport themselves appropriately and professionally. Some students may need additional support for successful learning or longer, more intentional plans; some students may need to be kept out of the profession. The taskforce must examine the role of assessment of student learning, student support, and remediation.

6. Instructor autonomy in higher education translates into idiosyncratic classrooms. All instructors have different personality styles and philosophies of teaching. Even with requirements for specific information in university syllabi and (if applicable) requirements for specific content to be addressed as delineated by accrediting bodies and/or licensure boards, instructors have a great degree of independence. The taskforce must investigate how counselor educators are prepared to teach and how they develop their own philosophies of teaching to guide their teaching practices.

7. Teaching and learning are growing processes; both instructor and student develop over time. While counselor education has borrowed many theories and techniques from other fields, it has remained developmental at its heart when it comes to teaching and learning. Although student development is frequently discussed in the literature, little is said about how instructors also develop. The taskforce should consider how to help counselor educators continue to evolve and grow in their quest for teaching excellence.

8. There has been a disconnect between teaching and research in our field. Counselor education does have some studies that describe andragogical practices in specific classrooms with specific content and skills. Outcome research in teaching in counselor education in significantly lacking. How do we know what we do in the classroom works? How do our practices tie with demonstrated student mastery? Is one technique better than another when it comes to delivering specific content or facilitating skill development? And most importantly, how do we know what we teach has positive impact on how counselors work with their clients - the predominant stakeholder group? The taskforce must identify questions left unanswered about teaching and learning in counselor education and how ACES, as the primary vehicle for professional development in teaching and learning, can be the vanguard of providing venues for addressing these questions.

Ultimately any report from an ACES taskforce serves to benefit the membership. The taskforce members chose to become a part of this initiative because they have a passion for teaching and a love of the students in counselor preparation programs. Many taskforce members have translated
that passion into research in teaching, student assessment, and doctoral preparation, and they continue to contribute to the field with publications and presentations. Research has provided the underpinnings for the final report.

**What do we mean by “best practice”?**

Perhaps this was the question we struggled the most with during the first few months of the process. What we wanted to avoid was a rigid, confining set of specifics for every instructor in every classroom with every learner. Not only was that an impossible task, but to do so would deprive counselor educators of flexibility, place limits on classroom interactions, micromanage techniques and content, and in the end, eradicate any joy in teaching and learning.

What we did wanted was fourfold:

a) **to provide suggestions** for practice that could guide neophyte and journeymen counselor educators on their way to developing their syllabi, their classes and their programs;

b) **to challenge current counselor educators** to consider where they were with their own practice;

c) **to consider what doctoral students needed to know** to be effective in their future classrooms and how preparation programs could provide those experiences;

d) **to offer ideas for programs** to consider when assessing student learning, creating and developing programs, and offering online learning venues.

The taskforce came back time and time again to the research that was available. Some of the research was available in counselor education specifically, but many of the suggestions offered in the sections below derived from research in the larger fields of education, teacher preparation, and educational psychology. Additional underpinnings for the sections came from on-the-ground research conducted by taskforce members and their colleagues. Thus, “best practice” in this case, translates into suggestions for instructors and programs based in the current literature and research.

**What is the scope of the report? What does it contain?**

Based on the eight major ideas the taskforce generated, thirteen major topics were created. In their development, these topics had to answer the question: **is this something all counselor educators need to know?** The taskforce members agreed that all major topics were areas that all doctoral students should be fluent in upon graduation, and for current counselor educators, areas that could provide additional reflective practice. In 2016, the taskforce broke in two writing and editing teams to address each topic. Each section followed an outline the taskforce generated that provided a guiding structure across all topics. While there were no page limitations, taskforce members were asked to keep the readership in mind and make sections manageable and as user-friendly as possible. After each section was drafted, drafts were exchanged among taskforce members for editing. Then the final report was edited for clarity. The following sections constitute the bulk of the report:

1. **Adult Learning: Theories & Models**
2. Syllabus Development and Course Construction
3. Doctoral-level Teaching Preparation
4. Assessment of Student Learning
5. Online Teaching
6. Developing a Philosophy of Teaching
7. Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness
8. Student Support and Remediation
9. Teaching Excellence
10. Program Structure and Curriculum Sequencing

As informative as we hope the report may be to ACES members, this is the culmination of only two years of work. There is still a great need for research in our field on these topics. Thus, each section concludes with a list of unanswered questions, areas of needed exploration, and future directions for investigation. The conclusion of the report offers a summary of all the major points generated by the report along with a series of suggestions for counselor education as a profession and ACES specifically as the means by which these questions can be addressed.

Finally, the taskforce members see this report as a living document. One that is in part, imperfect, as it would be impossible to capture every single concept in teaching and learning. Thus, we have added resources to each section to help readers guide their thinking and teaching practice. The taskforce views this report as a series of suggestions and implications, based on research, which can be contributed to by the membership over time so that the topics and concepts left unaddressed can be investigated, discussed, and applied in counselor education classrooms worldwide.

In closing, we hope this report is both useful and user-friendly. We hope it generates new ideas, strategies, and risk-taking in classrooms and programs. We hope it provides new venues for research and breathes passion into teaching in counselor education. We expect it may raise eyebrows and elicit critique. All of these activities serve to forward counselor education, and to benefit our students and their future clients.
ACES Past President Musings on Preparing Doctoral Students to be Educators

The process for completing such a practice brief on teaching in counselor education and supervision by the ACES Teaching Taskforce has taken a level of commitment to excellence and devotion to the profession of counseling that is far greater than each members’ individual contributions. To say this has been a team effort is an understatement. I commend all those involved who have contributed endless hours toward its completion. We also owe commendation to those counselor educators who have come before us in ACES’ 50 plus year history who have reminded us of the importance of our roles as counselor educators. This work stems from their passion and it is our hope that this body of work inspires the next generation of counselor educators to extend our ideas.

Our profession is focused on the delivery of effective, equitable, and ethical care for those that seek the services of professional counselors. This end cannot be forgotten. Yet to move toward this end attention must be given to the beginning of the process, the educative experiences counselor educators and supervisors engage in with students and supervisees. The pressures of day to day mental health needs can easily draw our attention toward the end product. Such pressures can lead counselor educators and supervisors to focus on the knowledge and skills necessary for effective, equitable, and ethical care without attending to the educative processes most facilitative of learning these bodies of knowledge and skills. Herein lies the value of counselor education programs. Herein lies the understanding that teaching and learning is a complex process that requires theoretical and pragmatic advancements. Herein lies the value and purpose of ACES. Our duty as ACES members to the larger profession of counseling is to explore the theoretically and empirically grounded educative processes that lead to the ultimate end product of effective, equitable, and ethical counseling services; a world in which safety, security, happiness, and wellness is possible for all humankind.

David M. Kleist
ACES President, 2008-2009
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Section One
Adult Learning: Theory and Models

Author: Angela I. Sheely-Moore
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1. Overview of the Topic and its Relationship to Counselor Education

Pedagogy and andragogy. Across disciplines, educators have various exposure levels to these two concepts which serve as the foundation of our approach to maximize adult student learning. The American Counseling Association Code of Ethics (2014) highlights the importance of counselor educators to possess an andragogical and theoretical framework. Conversely, results of Barrio Minton, Watcher Morris, and Yaites’ (2013) content analysis of 230 peer-reviewed, counselor education articles on teaching and learning indicated less than 15% of the articles “were clearly grounded in learning theory or instructional research” (p. 170). To help address this gap within our professional literature and to extend counselor educators’ knowledge base, this brief highlights four influential adult learning theories across the last four decades along with applications to the classroom setting. Multicultural and ethical implications, as well as areas for future study within our profession will also be examined.

For clarification purposes, several key words within this brief are defined as follows:

- **Pedagogy** refers to the literal meaning of “the art and science of teaching children” (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, p. 36).
- **Andragogy** refers to “any intentional and professional guided activity that aims at a change in adult persons” (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, p. 60).
- **Adult learning** refers to the “process of adults gaining knowledge and expertise” (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005, p. 174).

2. Relevant Research and Literature Support

The 1920s served as the genesis of adult learning research that was heavily based from the disciplines of psychology and educational psychologists (Merriam, 2001b). These early studies examined if adults could learn and later, explored the cognitive development process of adults (Merriam, 2001b). Behaviorists such as Thorndike, Pavlov, Watson, and Skinner as well as their cognitivist counterparts (e.g., Piaget, Brunner, Lewin) paved the foundation for the emergence of myriad learning theories. An in-depth examination of general learning theories would go beyond the scope of this brief, however there is a clear association between one’s endorsed learning theory and one’s teaching approach (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). Hence, readers may find the following link helpful in understanding the broad scope of general learning theories within four distinct orientations: [http://infed.org/mobi/learning-theory-models-product-and-process/](http://infed.org/mobi/learning-theory-models-product-and-process/). Another comprehensive overview of learning theories can be found at Oxford Brooks University’s Center for Staff and Learning Development website: [http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsld/resources/theories.html](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsld/resources/theories.html).
With an extensive body of research on adult learning theories and models, the author of this brief was unable to locate empirical studies specific to the use of learning theories in counselor education. One noted research study was conducted with non-traditional students enrolled in a psychology course (Chen, 2013). Using a qualitative design, Chen (2013) explored the learning experiences of 10 students aged 25 and older, based upon a course grounded in adult learning principles. Derived from conducted semi-structured interviews, Chen (2013) proposed a sequential “learning paradigm shift” (p. 145) consisting of five identified themes: 1) meaning-making from course content (personal reflective process); 2) emotional conflict based upon prior personal experience germane to the course content; 3) self-assessment to resolve emotional conflict with new knowledge; 4) fundamental shift in way of being (learning Rubicon); and 5) change in behavior. The next section provides areas of overlap between key theoretical assumptions of the four distinguished learning theories and Chen’s research findings.

Andragogy
Malcom S. Knowles is regarded as the father of adult education. Highly influenced by the works of Allen Tough’s Self Directed Learning (Hiemstra, 2003), Knowles wanted to distinguish unique traits of the adult learner from children. He termed his findings as andragogy, with several key assumptions describing the adult learner as one who:
- needs to understand the meaningfulness of instructional content to their lives;
- is self-directed in one’s learning process;
- utilizes life experience to enhance and challenge mental modes within an experiential context;
- has a life-centered orientation to learning in order to solve real-life problems; and
- is intrinsically motivated to learn (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005).

These assumptions served as Knowles’ framework to organize, implement, and measure a comprehensive program for adult learners (Knowles, 1980).

Despite his attempts to create a distinct set of assumptions for the developmental considerations of adult learners, many critics proposed these tenants could also apply to children (Merriam, 2001b). For example, it is not uncommon for adult students to be extrinsically motivated to earn an “A” for a course in order to continue successfully within their program of study. On the other hand, some children possess a natural curiosity for dinosaurs and absorb as much material on this topic as possible – unrelated to any school-assigned task. As a result, Knowles later adjusted his stance on this issue by stressing the learning context within an andragogical framework (Merriam, 2001a). Hence, when demonstrating basic counseling techniques to neophyte counseling students, an instructor-directed learning approach would be appropriate within an andragogical lens.

Self-Directed Learning (SDL)
Cyril Houle served as a catalyst in Allen Tough’s development of the SDL model. Houle’s (1961) seminal work identified three categories of adult learners: 1) activity-oriented, 2) goal-oriented, and 3) learning-oriented. The last of the aforementioned classifications were identified as those who had a strong desire for learning from an early age and simply found learning as a means “of having fun” (Houle, 1961, p. 38). Both Knowles and Tough were students of Houle (Hiemstra, 2003); hence, it is not surprising to notice overlapping tenets within these two foundational models of adult learning. As cited within Guglielmino, Long, and Hiemstra’s
(2004) historical timeline of *Self-direction in learning in the United States*, they noted the most frequently cited definition of SDL comes from Knowles, rather than Tough:

In its broadest meaning, “self-directed learning” describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. (p.18)

With empirical studies to back his claim (including his own conducted research), Tough (1982) strongly endorsed the notion of shifting more ownership of the learning process to students. Specifically, results from Tough’s (1982) interviews of 150 men and women residing in Canada and the U.S. indicated “highly successful and enthusiastic learning outside” of the classroom setting (p. 132). Hence, learning is not limited in the classroom, which resulted in the identification of myriad techniques to promote this learning approach (see next section for application).

Merriam (2001b) identified three general goals of SDL: 1) goals are contingent upon the writer’s philosophical orientation; 2) facilitation of transformational learning (see section below for details); and 3) implementation of socially-just acts. Similar to critiques regarding Knowles’ work, the notion of self-directedness is contingent upon the context rather than the assumption that adult learners are always self-directed (Merriam, 2001a).

**Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)**

Grounded in the works of Dewey, Piaget, and Lewin, ELT provided a cognitive approach to the classroom environment wherein experience serves as a key role in creating knowledge (Bergsteiner, Avery, & Neumann, 2010). The tenets of ELT rejected the notion of students playing a passive role in the education experience; rather, continuous interaction with the environment and the environment continuous interaction with students are instrumental aspects to experiential learning (Monk, 2013). Kolb (1984) characterized experiential learning as:

- a process that constantly changes with new experiences that requires resolution of conflict between two opposing views of the world
- a holistic process that encompasses human adaptation to all aspects of life, including education
- the process of creating knowledge.

Another component of ELT is the identification of four learning styles: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). Within this theoretical approach, specific learning environment characteristics are associated to maximize the learning experience within the aforementioned learning styles.

**Transformational Learning Theory (TLT)**

The term transformational alludes to a fundamental shift in one’s view of the self, others, and the world. According to the works of Freire and Habermas, this shift is contingent upon the process of critical reflection (as cited in Wilson and Kiely, 2002). The primary contributor to TLT is based on the works of Jack Mezirow. He and his fellow associates (1990) provided the following definitions on critical reflection and the theory itself:
Critical reflection is the “assessment of the validity of the presuppositions of one’s meaning perspectives, and examination of their sources and consequences” (p. xvi).

Critical self-reflection involves the “assessment of the way one has posed problems and of one’s own meaning perspectives” (p. xvi).

Transformative learning consists of the “process of learning through critical self-reflection, which results in the reformulation of a meaning perspective to allow a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative understanding of one’s experience. Learning includes acting on these insights” (p. xvi).

Meaning making and taking action serve as cornerstones of TLT, with initial research sponsored in the late 1970s exploring the exponentially high percentage of women enrolling in higher education (Mezirow, Taylor, & Associates, 2009). Using grounded theory methodology and data collected from 350 community college settings, the results of this study identified a sequential phase of learning from women enrolled in these institutions that became known as the transformative learning process:

1. Disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination
3. Critical self-assessment of assumptions
4. Recognition of a connection between one’s discontent and the process of transformation
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and action
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plan
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s new perspective (Mezirow, Taylor, & Associates, 2009, p. 19).

3. Application of Adult Learning Theory in Counselor Education

A diverse range of teaching strategies designed to maximize adult learning across various settings (e.g., formal institutions, informal settings and contexts) is abundant within scholarly publications and accessible through many different resources on the world wide web. The following section provides recommendations for applying adult learning models to the classroom environment, including one research study which supports the use of learning contracts within a counselor education program. The learning model of andragogy will be addressed first, followed by SDL, ELT, and lastly TLT.

Andragogy
The comprehensive nature of Knowles’ approach to adult learning would stem beyond the scope of this brief. However, an overview of Knowles (1980) andragogical model would be helpful for counselor educators who wish to integrate key practices into their course design, from the planning phase to course evaluation.
• **The learning climate** is conducive and respectful to adult learning needs. Hence, not only is the physical arrangement warm and inviting, but the psychological climate is one based upon a joint venture for both instructor and students to experience without judgment.

• **Diagnosis of needs** with student input. Rather than instructors serving as authority of what will be taught, students have an active role in assessing their current competencies and those required by a certain standard of performance (e.g., an effective counselor, an effective consultant). This ownership of the learning process fits directly with the assumption of adults needing to know the relevance of the topic being studied to their lived experience.

• **The planning process** that is shared between instructor and students. The ownership of learning is collaborative where students have a voice in designing and evaluating classroom learning activities, based on student’s needs and interest.

• **Conducting learning experiences** in which both instructor and students engaging in collaborative teaching.

• **Evaluation of learning** that is not one-directional and instructor-dominant. Rather, students participate in evaluating their own learning, with the instructor serving as a guide to help create this self-evaluative process.

**Self-Directed Learning (SDL)**
What might be refreshing to counselor educators is the possibility of several delineated strategies noted below are currently infused within their own teaching approaches. Reminiscent of Knowles’ emphasis on cultivating a learning climate, Heimstra (1985) identified seven essential characteristics of an effective facilitator of SDL:

1. Ability to recognize various style of personalities and learning styles
2. Promotion of learning through access and identification of myriad resources, including personal resources such as providing feedback
3. Capacity to teach student how to learn
4. Communication skills
5. Listening skills
6. Decision making ability
7. Ability to serve as a liaison between students

One specific approach within SDL is the use of learning contracts. These contracts are customized for individual students to identify specific goals and the means to bring these goals to fruition (Tough, 1982). In a mixed-methods design which involved 57 counseling students, O’Halloran and Delaney (2011) explored the impact of using learning contracts. In this study, learners were taught how to learn through an instructional topic on learning styles. Next, students developed their learning contracts, consisting of the following assessment options: research papers, individual and/or group presentations, in-class exams, and short papers (O’Halloran & Delaney, 2011, p. 78). Almost 90% of post survey respondents indicated a preference for individual learning contracts over a traditional approach to courses where students complete identical course assignments (O’Halloran & Delaney, 2011). A high number of respondents (87%) also indicated a connection between the type of course assessments used and their perceived academic performance (O’Halloran & Delaney, 2011). These results support the role of instructors as active facilitators of SDL.
Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)
Counselor educators have access to a wide range of teaching strategies which exemplify ELT: case studies, role plays, fishbowl exercises, Problem-Based Learning, and field-work experiences, to name a few. Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) described the roles of educators within an experiential learning framework:

- Assessor of students’ prior learning experience
- Facilitator of student self-reflection through open discussion and challenging assumptions
- Mentor to support life-long learning
- Assessor of students’ work products (e.g., portfolios)
- Catalyst to involve students in community practice (e.g., service learning projects)
- Advocate for students to recognize power differentials in society and engage in socially-just acts for oppressed individuals

Transformational Learning Theory (TLT)
Mezirow (1991) identified several ideal conditions to facilitate transformational learning experiences within the classroom; specifically, he indicated that students have:

- accurate and complete information
- the ability to be critically reflective by weighing evidence and evaluating arguments
- an openness to other perspectives
- equal opportunity to participate, and
- will accept an informed, objective, and rational consensus as a legitimate test of validity.

The assumption of Knowles’ andragogy serves a critical role in the promotion of transformative adult learning. In fact, Knowles (1991) expressed shared practices between andragogy and TLT: “helping adults elaborate, create, and transform their meaning schemes…through reflection on their content, the process by which they were learned, and their premises is what andragogy is about” (p. 201).

Specific processes and activities which fall into the TLT framework include the following:

- Reflective Judgment Model – a multi-layered and dynamic approach to challenging and supporting learners’ assumptions within a developmental framework.
- use of critical incidents
- education biographies
- journal writing
- use of mass media products (e.g., television shows, news broadcasts, advertisement, print media) and literature (Mezirow, 1990).

Detailing these teaching approaches would fall beyond the scope of this brief; however, counselor educators would find one of Mezirow’s (1990) seminal textbooks, *Fostering critical reflection in adulthood: A guide to transformative and emancipatory learning*, helpful to gain a better understanding of TLT classroom strategies. The full citation is located within the reference section of this brief.
4. Considerations for Diverse Learners and Multicultural Implications

To meet the needs of a pluralistic client base, counselor educators have the ethical duty to infuse multicultural issues within training curriculum for pre-service counselors (ACA, 2014). It behooves educators to serve as role models to their students by examining the cultural implications of their preferred adult learning theories. As described earlier in this brief, there is not a “one size fits all” approach to any learning theory. Each of the theories aforementioned have received criticism in terms of its culture bound approach to adult learning.

A strength within these mentioned theories is the appreciation of the holistic framework that is involved in the learning process. Merriam (2001a) acknowledged how adult learning theories are more than just a cognitive process and involves multiple facets within the human organism that impact learning. However, it is noteworthy that each of the aforementioned learning theories are developed from American scholars, with a Western approach to the learning process; primarily, the emphasis of the individual serving as essence to promoting adult learning. This emphasis of individualism within these frameworks can undermine students who view the teacher as the expert. In the broader scope of criticism, Merriam (2008) stressed the need to explore the learning context rather than the individual learner. Cultural considerations (e.g., age, race, employment status) can serve as barriers or catalysts to the learning process. Issues such as these can serve as areas of future exploration.

5. Ethical Implications

With the ethical duty of counselor educators to promote multicultural competencies, it is critical to maximize inclusivity when implementing Western-based adult learning theories to a diverse range of students. From syllabus construction, course assignments, as well as course activities in and out of the classroom setting, counselor educators are to ensure the context of learning is conductive for all students. Exploring students’ learning styles and assessing students’ role within the learning process (e.g., passive/active learner, expert is seen within instructor/role of expert is seen as a collaborative venture between student and instructor) would help to mitigate the perpetuation of a one-dimensional approach to adult learning.

6. Unanswered Questions/Future Directions

With the scarcity of counselor education literature germane to the topic of learning theories, there are myriad opportunities to explore the implications of these long standing approaches to student learning. Below are just a few research questions that might contribute to our literature base:

- How does race impact the learning process for students taught within an andragogical/SDL/ELT/TLT framework?
- What is the experience of counselor educators use of andragogy/SDL/ELT/TLT in their teaching approach?
- What is the impact of using andragogical/SDL/ELT/TLT strategies on student learning?
- What instructor factors impact the students’ ability to demonstrate transformative learning within a multicultural counseling/social justice counseling course?
• How does non-Western adult learning theory models impact the adult learning experience of students enrolled in counseling programs within the United States?

7. Resources

Below are additional resources to gain further understanding with the following adult learning models:

- *Kolb & Kolb’s Experience Based Learning System, Inc.*: [http://learningfromexperience.com/about/](http://learningfromexperience.com/about/)
- *National College for Teaching & Leadership, Exploring Transformative Learning*: [https://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/transfer/open/advanced-facilitation/advfacs03/advfacs03-t2.html](https://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/transfer/open/advanced-facilitation/advfacs03/advfacs03-t2.html)

8. References


Section Two
Syllabus Development and Course Construction

Syllabus/Course Construction

Author: Jane A. Cox
Reviewer: David Kleist

1. Overview of Topic and Its Relationship to Counselor Education

One of the first tasks that counselor educators assume at the beginning of an academic term is inviting students into a learning community, one in which students become excited about the process of becoming a counselor and take responsibility for their active learning. The syllabus is an early vehicle to undertake this task. Through syllabi, instructors set the tone for a course, state the purpose of the course, convey their expectations of students, present evaluation criteria, lay out the plan for the academic term, and communicate other relevant course information. Constructing a course and documenting that construction in a syllabus must be carefully considered; just as a syllabus is an opportunity for engagement, if it is too long and unwieldy, instructors risk disengagement of students. Students who do not find elements in a syllabus (such as an extensive list of course “rules”) meaningful to their notions about counseling and learning may not become fully invested in the course. Singham’s (2007), a physics professor, cautioned against “syllabus creep” whereby faculty keep adding new rules to combat each student excuse for not meeting existing rules” (p. 55). Singham went so far as to call for “death to the syllabus” (p. 55), at least for syllabi that were rigid, rule-bound documents that attempt to cover every possible student problem that might arise. He lamented the fact that some faculty create rule-bound syllabi chiefly to avoid using judgment in ambiguous situations and to defend themselves against grade disputes. Though Singham is a physics professor, his advice to consider carefully how to construct syllabi that most fully engage students at the beginning of a term applies to all disciplines, including counselor education.

A syllabus is only as effective as the design of the related course and is the documentation of that design; reaching the stage of syllabus construction assumes that the course has been thoughtfully constructed, that the goals for the course are appropriate for the course description, and that the course is appropriate for the intended students (Riviere, Picard, & Coble, 2016.). “After selecting learning goals for the class, the instructor decides how to measure whether students have achieved those goals, and then decides what learning experiences in and outside of class will help students practice what they should learn, that can be achieved in one semester, and that are rooted in the discipline” (Riviere et al., “First: A Good Syllabus” para. 1). The instructor then uses the syllabus to convey these decisions about the course.

1 Portions of this chapter on Syllabus/Course Construction were taken from the following book chapter, with permission from the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision:

2. Relevant Research and Literature Support

The vast majority of the literature on syllabus construction is practice oriented rather than research oriented. Literature searches reveal books and articles on considerations when designing a syllabus and “tip” sheets. These articles particularly focus on the purpose of syllabi and elements to include in syllabi.

A. Purpose of Syllabi: Communication, Organization, and Agreement

In their review of literature, Eberly, Newton, and Wiggins (2001) noted three general functions of syllabi: syllabi are a means to communicate with students; syllabi promote course organization; and syllabi serve as agreements between faculty and students (p. 59). Regarding communication with students, syllabi typically convey a wealth of information, such as course objectives, weekly course schedule, assignments, grading policies, and so forth. Faculty and students are perhaps most familiar with this type of syllabi communication, much of which centers on faculty expectations of students. Perhaps there is not as much familiarity with the potential for syllabi to communicate less concrete information, such as the instructor’s philosophy of teaching and learning, or the tone of the course. For example, syllabus creation can offer instructors an opportunity to invite students to be collaborators in the learning process, to invite them on an “educational adventure” (Matejka & Kurke, 1994, p. 117).

It is important to consider not only what is communicated to students through syllabi (the content), but also how it is communicated (i.e., the tone; Harnish et al., 2011; Matejka & Kurke, 1994). The tone of a syllabus conveys information about the instructor’s teaching style and sets the stage for student engagement. Slattery and Carlson (2005) noted that there is variety in tone, some possibilities being “warm and friendly, formal, condescending, or confrontational” (p. 159). Harnish et al. (2011) advocated for the development of a “warm” syllabus, one that “provides a sense of belonging and community . . . [and] removes unnecessary and unhelpful barriers between instructors and students, making the classroom a comfortable and safe place for discovery” (p. 23). These authors suggested several strategies for creation of a warm syllabus, including use of “positive language,” explanation of the purpose of assignments, “humor,” “compassion” (for example, flexibility in attendance when students have family emergencies), and “enthusiasm” (pp. 23–24). The examples they provided are evidence of a learner-centered environment. For instance, they suggested that instructors creating a warm syllabus may choose student-centered language, even in simple, practical items, such as listing “student hours” rather than “office hours” (p. 26). As another example, for items such as optional readings, instead of simply stating that optional readings are on reserve in the library, instructors could note how they chose the optional readings and why they find them important (p. 27). Instructors using such language, and creating warm syllabi, hope to motivate students to engage more fully in their learning. Counselor educators should be especially skilled at creating warm syllabi, since in their clinical training and practice they have learned the rapport building skills and attention to language that are required.

The creation of syllabi also serves the purpose of providing structure and organization to a course. If our goal is to produce syllabi that engage students in active learning from the outset of
a course, considerable thought and planning must go into both the design of a new course syllabus and revision of existing syllabi. Instructors consider the purpose of the course, what content will be shared in the course, how students will be involved in that content (activities and assignments), what they hope students will gain from the course (outcomes), and how they will measure student outcomes (O’Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008).

Much has been written on what components instructors should include in their syllabi (e.g., Matejka & Kurke, 1994; O’Brien et al., 2008; Slattery & Carlson, 2005, Weimer, 2002). In their comprehensive book on course syllabi, O’Brien et al. (2008) offered a checklist of possible items for inclusion in a syllabus, including common elements such as course description, required readings, weekly schedule, and policies. In addition to these familiar items, O’Brien et al. also suggested that instructors include their philosophy of teaching in the syllabus, which might take the form of a letter to students. Their example of this is a list entitled “my rules of the road” which includes such “rules” as “I believe too many classroom rules get in the way of good teaching and good learning” (p. 47) and “Teaching is something I do with students, not something I do to them” (p. 48). This relates back to the communication of a warm tone in a syllabus. O’Brien et al. also suggested including information in the syllabus about how students can be successful in the class, such as suggestions on how to study for the course (p. 103). This conveys a tone that reflects the instructor’s investment in helping students succeed.

Finally, a commonly cited purpose of syllabi is that they serve as an agreement or contract between instructors and students (Eberly et al., 2001; Hudd, 2003; Matejka & Kurke, 1994). Syllabi convey both what an instructor expects of students, and what students can expect of the instructor and course. This is not unlike our use of informed consent statements with clients in counseling; we want clients (and students) to know what we are willing and able to offer, and what we expect of them in return. As contracts, syllabi can be viewed as protective, in that they may protect students by holding an instructor accountable to cover the material and facilitate the activities noted in the syllabi. They also protect faculty in the event of a student complaint, such as a grade grievance or lawsuit. Slattery and Carlson (2005) described this as an “evidentiary function” of a syllabus (p. 160). For example, in the event of a grade grievance, the syllabus can provide evidence of the course expectations and grading procedures.

The use of syllabi to protect faculty from potential actions taken against them by students carries with it the risk of the protective factor overriding the other functions of syllabi (e.g., communication). If this happens, then syllabi become the rule-bound documents that Singham (2007) cautioned us against. Therefore, one challenge that faculty face is how to balance the implementation of the various functions of syllabi.

Often what is missing in the syllabus “contract” is the other party’s (students’) input into the creation of the syllabus. Authors have suggested that students be involved in the planning of a course (Benjamin, 2005; Hudd, 2003; McDevitt, 2004; Singham, 2007). For example, Hudd (2003) described how she worked collaboratively with students to create their course assignments for a sociology class. She gave students guidance regarding the types of issues they should consider when making suggestions for assignments, such as what types of assignments to include (projects, exams, etc.) and when assignments should be due (p. 197). Hudd asserted that
students more actively participated in their learning when she shared the power of syllabus creation with them.

In addition to its use as a communication and organizational tool, and as a means to “contract” with students, syllabi can also serve other purposes. For instance, syllabi present evidence of meeting accreditation standards; they are included in self-studies for the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and are reviewed by CACREP site team members during site visits (CACREP, 2016). Syllabi may contain charts showing which CACREP standards are addressed in a course, what student learning outcome(s) is associated with each standard, and how outcomes are assessed (e.g., class activity, exam, etc.; Barrio Minton, Gibson, Wachter Morris, 2016). Syllabi are also reviewed when faculty are trying to determine proof of equivalency requirements for transferred courses (Eberly et al., 2001; Wasley, 2008) and they can be used to evaluate an instructor’s “scholarship of teaching” (Albers, 2003, p. 63).

B. Elements in a Syllabus

There are no doubt innumerable ways to construct a syllabus and to invite students into a learning experience; syllabi are as varied as (and reflective of) our teaching styles. Yet there are some common elements found in syllabi, such as the following list adapted from Slattery and Carlson (2005):

- Instructor information, such as email address, mailing address, office location, and office hours
- Course description, which may be required to be the catalogue description or may be more customized to fit the instructor’s vision of the course
- Course goals, or student learning outcomes, which should align with the course description and may be influenced by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), for those programs that are CACREP accredited
- Required and optional textbooks
- Student requirements, such as in-class and out-of-class assignments (i.e., homework), expected participation, and so forth; the purpose of such requirements is to accomplish the course goals, therefore they should be should be closely related to the goals
- Grading policy and perhaps grading rubrics
- Course schedule which outlines the topic and homework for each week of the term
- Contact information for support services, such as services for students with disabilities
- Policies that the instructor and/or program see as important, such as a statement about the program’s commitment to diversity, academic honesty policy, class cancellation and campus closing information (e.g., for severe weather), and so forth

3. Application

The above list is a “recipe” of sorts for a syllabus, yet much more is included in an effective syllabus. If the above list is some of the “whats” for a syllabus, the following are a few suggestions about “how” you might create new or revise existing syllabi and are keys to an inviting and engaging syllabus. Being intentional about how we create a syllabus, including
consideration of the purpose of the course and ways to motivate students to get excited about their learning, is what adds interest to a syllabus and “hooks” students at the start of a course.

- **Keep student engagement in the forefront.** From the initial development of a course and its syllabus, think about how to best motivate and empower students to invest in their learning. Consider how your syllabus might either intimidate students or encourage them to be active participants in the course. Think about how you might motivate students to be engaged through all that you write in the syllabus, from course objectives to grading policies. One component of this might be how we invite students to become learners with us, or our “hospitality.” O’Reilley (1998) noted that

  Hospitality defines a space for the visitor—the student—to be herself, because she is received graciously. . . . I mention this hospitality space, too, in the syllabus. I tell the students that I expect them to attend class regularly, and that I will try to receive them with unconditional presence. (p. 8)

- **Make planning and organization a priority.** Time spent in the planning phase can save time later. Matejka and Kurke (1994) viewed syllabi as “preventive medicine” (p. 116), in that a well thought out syllabus (e.g., one which considers potential questions that students may have) will save time and prevent possible future problems. In his book on designing college courses, Fink (2003) recommended 10 steps for instructors to move through before creating the syllabus. For example, in his first step of “[identifying] important situational factors” (p. 69), Fink suggested that instructors consider factors such as the expectations of potential stakeholders or evaluators (e.g., accreditation bodies, state licensure boards, society as a whole) and the students’ situation and attributes (e.g., students’ learning styles, probable goals for the course, and status as full or part-time).

- **Find ways to connect with students before the start of the term.** Technology has made this easy to do, since many/most instructors can simply look up class rosters online and email all students as a group. As mentioned previously, communicating with students before the start of the course is one way to welcome them and inspire them to get excited about investing their time and energy in the course. An instructor can email students before the term starts, to give them a preview of the course and let them know of the instructor’s excitement earlier than might have happened otherwise. If instructors plan early enough to do a thorough review and update of the course, and then post the syllabus online a week or two before the start of the term, they are not hurrying at the last minute to revise course material and copy syllabi. So not only does pre-term communication with students help prepare them for the course, it helps instructors better prepare as well.

- **Carefully consider what components you want to include in your syllabus.** In addition to the previously mentioned traditional components (e.g., course description, course schedule), consider other items that might be of use to students. Where might they find help with writing on campus? What are policies of the university (e.g., attendance policies) and the program (e.g., for professional behavior) that would be important to include on a syllabus? New faculty can look to experienced instructors for assistance, as well as explore the literature that discusses in detail possible components of syllabi (e.g., O’Brien et al., 2008; Slattery & Carlson, 2005).
- **Take care in the presentation of your syllabi.** As with all printed material, the reader gets a quick first impression by how the material appears on the page. Matejka and Kurke (1994) suggested using a variety of fonts and layouts to make a syllabus look professional, though it is important not to overdo the formatting and distract the reader (Slattery & Carlson, 2005). Consider the order in which you want to present the various elements of your syllabus, perhaps putting what is most important and what students need to access most often on the first pages (Slattery & Carlson, 2005, p. 163). Make your syllabi as readable as possible, assessing this by asking for input from colleagues and students.

- **Explore ways to use the syllabus to send “motivational messages”** (Slattery & Carlson, 2005, p. 162). Find ways to invite students to the “feast” by creating a “promising syllabus” (Bain, 2004, p. 75), one which articulates the opportunities that await students enrolled in your course. As mentioned previously, one way to send such a message is the inclusion of a letter in your syllabus.

- **Make the syllabus your own.** While it is useful to draw on existing resources, such as the ACA/ACES Syllabus Clearinghouse (2016) or existing syllabi at one’s institution, it is important that instructors craft syllabi that reflect their ideas and values, rather than simply having them “handed down from generation to generation” (Eberly et al., 2001, p. 56). Give yourself permission to make changes that reflect your strengths (e.g., are you more skilled at processing content, lecturing, etc.), in order to be more confident and genuine in your teaching.

- **Ensure that assignments are related to course goals.** We teach our students that when they write treatment plans for/with clients in counseling, the objectives and strategies have to relate back to the treatment goals. Similarly, when writing syllabi, course assignments should relate directly back to goals for the course. If there is an assignment that does not clearly relate to a course goal, consider revising or eliminating the assignment (Slattery & Carlson, 2005). A review for such consistency will help instructors ensure that assignments are meaningful ways to accomplish course goals and help students see the relevance of assignments.

- **Explain the rationale for course activities and assignments.** As with most undertakings in life, people engage more if they find meaning in what they are doing. Instructors can use the syllabus as one vehicle that not only articulates the expectations of students, but also explains why the instructor has those expectations (Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Stark, 2000). For instance, one assignment I have for students in a couples counseling class is to interview a diverse, underrepresented couple (e.g., mixed race couple, gay or lesbian couple). I explain in the syllabus that interviewing such couples will help students gain more appreciation for the issues that these couples face (that “majority” couples likely do not face), and how this will ultimately help when they counsel underrepresented individuals and couples. Though a few students worry about locating such couples, they take the extra effort (and find the extra courage they may require) to interview underrepresented couples, and often discover this to be the most rewarding and enlightening activity of the course.

- **Routinely revise your syllabus.** Perhaps one of the greatest challenges we face as educators is staying current. Keeping up with the counseling literature can be a daunting but necessary task; we are responsible for conveying up-to-date information to students. We are also
responsible for being constantly creative in how we present this information to our students, so hopefully our method of presentation changes over our years of teaching. By continually updating our syllabi, we not only present fresh material and methods to students, but we can stay refreshed ourselves as we remain learners. We may also revise our syllabi based on past experiences with a course (Matejka & Kurke, 1994; Slattery & Carlson, 2005), for example, to clarify a confusing assignment or more deeply address an important topic (e.g., by adding new readings).

- **Model being a counselor through use of syllabi.** In all of our activities as instructors, we have the potential to model aspects of being an effective counselor. Though counseling and instruction are different, there are some similarities. When considering these similarities, we might ask ourselves “What do I hope to model for students?” Through our syllabi, we may consider how to model good communication, effective collaboration, shared responsibility, and appropriate boundary setting, all the while being transparent regarding the power differential between student and instructor. Done effectively, this may help students consider how to carry out these same types of behaviors with their clients.

- **Invite others to review your syllabi.** Just as we may have peers observe our teaching to give us suggestions for improvement, peers can also review our syllabi to offer helpful tips. Bain (2004) noted a preference for this type of peer evaluation rather than a one-time observation of teaching, because he believed observers tend to give positive teaching evaluations to their colleagues who teach as they do (pp. 168–169). Also, a single teaching observation may not give an adequate indication of the instructor’s teaching ability. Rather, Bain contended that:
  
  Peers can . . . provide essential comments on the qualities of the learning objectives. They can look at the syllabus, the way students are assessed, the nature of assignments, reports from the teacher, and even examples of student work to understand the nature of those objectives. (p. 169)

This type of peer review may be particularly valuable when untenured instructors are creating their portfolio for renewal, tenure, and promotion.

4. **Considerations for Diverse Learners and Multicultural Implications**

As articulated in the *Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies* (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015), it is imperative that counselor educators continue to explore ways to help students “develop self-awareness, so that they may explore their attitudes and beliefs, develop knowledge, skills, and action relative to their self-awareness and worldview” (p. 5). Additionally, the American Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics (2015) calls for counselor educators to “infuse material related to multiculturalism/diversity into all courses and workshops for the development of professional counselors” (p. 14) and to “actively infuse multicultural/diversity competency in their training and supervision practices. . . . train students to gain awareness, knowledge, and skills in the competencies of multicultural practice” (p. 15). And the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP; 2016) requires that accredited programs infuse teaching about diversity and multiculturalism throughout much of a program’s curriculum, as well as assess related student outcomes. These multiple appeals recognize the continuous need to understand and affirm the
diversity in our ever-changing society, as reflected in “increasing racial/ethnic and linguistic diversity” (Day-Vines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013).

A syllabus contains the outline of the entire course and is therefore a primary means of fulfilling the above requests by setting up the course to address the need for training future counselors to honor the diversity of their clients and to practice culturally competent counseling. Course objectives can clearly state the focus on diversity; for example, “Students will increase knowledge and skills related to . . . counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes including age, gender and ethnic differences, verbal and non-verbal behaviors and personal characteristics, orientations, and skills . . . client characteristics and behaviors that influence helping processes including age, gender and ethnic differences, verbal and non-verbal behaviors and personal characteristics, traits, capabilities, and life circumstances” (Cox, 2016, p. 1). Other aspects, such as readings and assignments, can provide students with experiences that broaden their perspectives about diversity and aid them in reflecting on their own biases and assumptions. For instance, required reading may include the competencies documents found on the ACA website (“American Counseling Association – Competencies,” 2016), such as the Introductory Competencies for LGBTQ-Affirmative Counseling and the Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling. Creative assignments can be designed to expand students’ ideas about diversity. For instance, in a counseling skills class, students may be asked to read a novel about a culture other than their own and write about their observations of the unique strengths and challenges of the characters, the complexities inherent in the characters’ lives, and how these notions may relate to the counseling process. Students may then be asked to interact with people who identify with the culture(s) represented in the book, such as by attending a related campus organization’s meeting or faith community’s service.

5. Ethical Considerations

In addition to the ethical obligations mentioned above that address training culturally competent counselors, the ACA Code of Ethics (2015) calls on counselor educators to infuse ethics training throughout the curriculum. The ACA Code of Ethics also speaks to the need for counselor educators to teach techniques that have a basis in theory or empirical research, and to discuss with students the risks of using innovation techniques (p. 14). Additionally, counselor educators are to protect students’ welfare when asking students to participate in personal growth activities and to honor students’ autonomy by allowing them to choose what to share with others. Syllabi should be reflective of these ethical responsibilities.

Another ethical charge for counselor educators is to articulate for students how they will be evaluated (ACA Code of Ethics, 2015, p. 15). To accomplish this, the syllabus should have a clear course grading policy, not only stating the points required for a particular grade, but also any requirements regarding attendance and participation, penalties for late assignments, and so forth. The use of grading rubrics can help counselor educators to grade assignments fairly and there are many resources that detail how to create and use such rubrics (e.g., Goggins Selke, 2013).
6. Unanswered Questions/Future Directions

One challenge when creating syllabi is thinking through how to simultaneously establish authority and be collaborative with students. Though we may not particularly like to think that we need to establish authority, or want to view ourselves as instructors who have this as a goal, the syllabus may be used to convey our role as instructor. If taken too far, we can get too caught up in firmly laying out expectations of students, in order to forewarn those few who may be tempted to underachieve, miss class, turn assignments in late, and so forth. Thompson (2007) articulated this challenge well by stating,

… teachers must balance the tension between showing students that they are caring, warm and friendly individuals while simultaneously demonstrating that they are serious, task-oriented and evaluative…. Whereas teachers often strive to create a hospitable environment to make students feel welcome the first day of class, they must also establish rules and procedures that illustrate their authority. (p. 55)

How do we avoid being so authoritative with students that we convey “learning, like medicine, is good for you but not enjoyable” (Singham, 2007, p.55)? Singham wondered if students are so conditioned to believe this (from past educational experiences) that we can’t change their perspective. But he also noted that “students act the way they do because we treat them the way we do” (Singham, 2007, p. 55). So we may keep contemplating how to treat counseling students in ways that convey we presume they are excited about their learning and just waiting for us to set the stage for their engagement, beginning with the syllabus.

Another challenge we may continue to consider throughout our careers as counselor educators is how to use syllabi (and all other aspects of teaching) to open up space for student learning. Mary Rose O’Reilly (1998), in her book Radical Presence: Teaching as Contemplative Practice, shares her thoughts about the teaching and learning processes. She wrote about creating space for student learning (giving credit to Parker Palmer for this notion), rather than simply aiming to fill students up with our knowledge and wisdom (p. 1). Her ideas about hospitality in the classroom challenge us to thing about how to better use syllabi to welcome students into an active, engaged learning community.

7. Resources

- **ACA-ACES Syllabus Clearinghouse (2016):** The American Counseling Association (ACA) and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) joined together to create the ACA-ACES Syllabus Clearinghouse, which members can access at [http://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/clearinghouses/syllabus-clearinghouse](http://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/clearinghouses/syllabus-clearinghouse). Counselor educators can post their syllabi to the clearinghouse so that others can get ideas for course activities and assignments, textbooks, and so forth. Syllabi were available for a variety of courses, such as counseling theories, professional orientation, and practicum (ACA, 2016).

- **Books on syllabus design, such as:**

- **University websites** – Many universities have resources to assist faculty with preparing a syllabus. Below are a few examples.
8. References


Section Three

Doctoral Level Teaching Preparation for Counselor Educators

Authors: Eric R. Baltrinic, Casey Barrio Minton, and Susannah Wood
Reviewer: Susannah Wood

This section on doctoral level teaching preparation for counselor educators provides a brief overview of the concept, relevance to counselor education, and teaching preparation in action. A discussion of the professional responsibilities, a review of the topic with attention to the need of diverse students, and ethical considerations associated with the topic are provided. The section concludes with take-away points and questions for future research and practice. Related resources and references are included.

1. Overview of the Topic and its Relationship to Counselor Education

The development of future faculty members begins during the doctoral preparation process (Austin, 2002), where students are exposed to the tasks and expectations they will likely confront as future faculty members. Silverman (2003) suggested that new faculty members need to be able to manage all aspects of the job, including teaching, in order to be successful. Adequate preparation for teaching roles may better help future faculty members meet other demands for research and service by reducing planning time for teaching. On the other hand, a lack of teaching preparation for new faculty members may lead to frustration and a sense of incompetence (Silverman, 2003). The bottom line: knowing how to teach is critical to fulfilling teaching duties and avoiding student complaints and poor evaluations of faculty teaching (Robinson, & Hope, 2013).

Graduate students across disciplines receive mixed messages about the importance of teaching compared to research and other duties (Austin, 2002). Graduate students are concerned about pedagogical training and being able to handle their first faculty positions, noting that teaching assistantships alone did not prepare them for teaching roles adequately (Golde & Dore, 2001; Nyquist & Woodford, 2000). This lack of preparation is concerning given that counselor educators reported spending more time in teaching-related activities compared to scholarship and service activities (Davis, Levitt, McGlothlin, & Hill, 2006).

2. Relevant Research in Teaching Preparation and Counselor Education

The importance of teaching preparation for faculty members is not new in higher education (Boyer, 1990; Milton, 1972) and, more specifically, the counseling profession (Lanning, 1990). Lanning (1990) described effective counselor educators as “effective counselors who are able to teach graduate courses,” and argued that future counselor educators need “systematic preparation to teach in their role as instructors effectively (p. 171). Lanning asserted that programs and practices that promote teaching before learning how to teach have no place in counselor education. Hunt and Weber Gilmore (2011) echoed Lanning’s assertion and cautioned programs from using sink-or-swim approaches to teaching preparation. Hence, intentional acts of teaching preparation are critical for future counselor educators’ success. Some authors even suggested that counselor education (CE) doctoral students need to develop competencies in best
practices in teaching (Malott, Hrindaya Hall, Sheely-Moore, Krell, & Cardaciotto, 2014). Ultimately, it is up to CE programs to determine how best to achieve goals of preparing doctoral students to teach (Baltrinic, Jencius, & McGlothlin, 2016). However, all CE programs need to assist doctoral students with teaching preparation as a common professional goal.

Accordingly, the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) identified teaching as one of five core areas for preparation of doctoral-level counselor educators. Specifically, accredited doctoral programs must demonstrate coverage of several content areas related to teaching:

- Roles and responsibilities related to educating counselors (6.B.3.a)
- Pedagogy and teaching methods relevant to counselor education (6.B.3.b)
- Models of adult development and learning (6.B.3.c)
- Instructional and curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation methods relevant to counselor education (6.B.3.d)
- Effective approaches for online instruction (6.B.3.e)
- Screening, remediation, and gatekeeping functions relevant to teaching (6.B.3.f)
- Assessment of learning (6.B.3.g)
- Ethical and culturally relevant strategies used in counselor preparation (6.B.3.h)
- The role of mentoring in counselor education (6.B.3.i)

In addition to covering the content areas above, counselor education doctoral programs are charged with assessing students’ learning in teaching through multiple measures at multiple points during their doctoral training (CACREP, 2016). For example, programs may assess CES students’ teaching as part of the doctoral-level internship, in which students must have field experiences for at least three of five core areas.

The inclusion of teaching-related accreditation guidelines does not preclude the need for more research on how to best prepare counselor educators to teach. In fact, 10-year content analysis of teaching articles revealed only five articles focused on the preparation of doctoral-level counselor educators and supervisors (Barrio Minton, Wachter Morris, & Yaites, 2014), with only one of those five articles specifically focusing on teaching preparation of doctoral students (see Orr, Hall, & Hulse-Killacky, 2008).

3. Teaching Preparation in Action

Despite the paucity of research on teaching preparation, there are more recent publications and studies-in-progress addressing the issue of teaching preparation in counselor education. Hall and Hulse (2010) suggested that researchers investigate the role of mentoring on doctoral students’ teaching preparation experiences. Accordingly, the role of faculty mentoring as a teaching preparation practice is currently being investigated (Baltrinic, Gimenez Hinkle, & Moate, n.d.). Forthcoming findings from these authors support the presence of distinct mentoring approaches to teaching preparation in counselor education. More specifically, counselor educators’ preferred approaches to mentoring doctoral students in teaching reflect preferences for (a) relation-focused mentoring favoring the development of empathic bonds and strengths-based interactions between faculty members and students, (b) supervision-focused mentoring
favoring formal learning transactions, and (c) evaluation-focused interactions favoring the use of formal feedback and evaluation processes.

Baltrinic et al. (2016) identified coteaching as a teaching preparation process defining key characteristics for programs seeking to intentionally use coteaching as a teaching preparation vehicle. CE programs using coteaching can ground teaching preparation experiences in commonly defined processes that “provides counselor education doctoral students with essential learning opportunities” (Baltrinic, et al, 2016, p. 40). According to these authors, teaching preparation is a collaborative learning process that supports doctoral students’

- engagement in a trusting relationship with a faculty teaching mentor,
- advancement through a series of progressively challenging teaching experiences in and out of the classroom,
- refinement of teaching knowledge and skills under the guidance of a supervising teacher, and
- development of teaching competencies that will transfer to future professional teaching roles (pp. 40-41).

The findings discussed above support the need for CE programs to have both formal and informal mechanisms for the teaching preparation of doctoral students. Further, they lend support to the use of flexible, definition-driven approaches to meeting doctoral students’ teaching preparation needs.

Additional research is underway to investigate how CE doctoral programs teach the teacher (Barrio Minton & Price, 2015). Upon reviewing CE program documents, analyzing survey data from CACREP liaisons, and conducting content analysis of CE program syllabi, the authors found that the vast majority of CE programs required coursework and field experiences in teaching and maintained local control over those learning activities (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Formal Teaching Preparation Methods in CE Programs (N = 29)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Yes, in CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE Program Requires Coursework in Teaching</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE Program Offers Elective Coursework in Teaching</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE Program Requires Fieldwork in Teaching</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE Program Offers Elective Fieldwork in Teaching</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants overwhelmingly indicated that CACREP 2016 standards were addressed in required counselor education courses; however, a content analysis of 17 syllabi submitted for review indicated gaps between program-reported coverage of standards and coverage reflected on syllabi (Barrio Minton & Price, 2015; Table 2).
Table 2
Program Reported Coverage Compared to Overt Syllabus Coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Program-Reported Addressed ((n = 29))</th>
<th>Identified in Syllabus ((n = 17))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roles and responsibilities related to educating counselors ((6.B.3.a))</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy and teaching methods relevant to counselor education ((6.B.3.b))</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models of adult development and learning ((6.B.3.c))</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional and curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation methods relevant to counselor education ((6.B.3.d))</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective approaches for online instruction ((6.B.3.e))</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening, remediation, and gatekeeping functions relevant to teaching ((6.B.3.f))</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of learning ((6.B.3.g))</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical and culturally relevant strategies used in counselor preparation ((6.B.3.h))</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of mentoring in counselor education ((6.B.3.i))</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the majority of CE programs addressed teaching preparation through formal coursework, fieldwork such as coteaching, and/or having CE doctoral students teach classes as instructors of record, the number of participants was limited; the roughly 50% of CACREP-accredited programs that did not participate in the study may not have emphasized teaching in the same way. Findings from this study converge with Baltrinic et al. (2016) and Baltrinic et al. (n.d.) noting **most counselor education programs use coteaching, fieldwork, and supervision of teaching within a mentoring relationship to prepare doctoral students to teach.**

4. Professional Ethics and Responsibilities

CE programs and faculty have a responsibility to prepare doctoral students who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to prepare professional counselors who are ethical and effective in their service to vulnerable populations. To do so, doctoral students need to be active participants in their own professional development, including development as teachers. Professional development as teachers needs to occur in the context of a mentoring relationship with experienced faculty member(s) (Baltrinic et al., 2016; Orr et al., 2008). In other words, that the transformation from doctoral student to professional involves collaborative mentoring relationships (Reybold, 2003).

Most CE doctoral students enter their training programs with little to no teaching experience, and even doctoral students with prior K-12 teaching experience may not transfer teaching skills to higher education settings. Doctoral students interested in pursuing careers as faculty members need to be able to effectively teach. Doctoral students’ teaching will be evaluated based on students’ experiences of teaching, thus requiring a level of competency and ability to grow based on lessons learned from their teaching encounters.
In short it is a two-way ethical obligation, for faculty members and students, to fully engage in the teaching preparation process as a part of doctoral training. Decisions regarding appropriate level of responsibilities for doctoral student instructors and co-instructors should be made with caution and with all students’ needs in mind. Students should not be placed in instructor roles without the support of faculty members until there is clear evidence they can function independently. Ultimately, counselor educators are expected to perform independently in teaching roles and meet the needs of a diverse adult learners.

Freire (1970) said it best: the act of prescription is the foundation of oppression in the classroom. In other words, imposing one individual’s choice upon another (through the act of teaching) forces conformity to the prescriber’s mindset. Counselor educators want to assure that new generations of counselor educators are open-minded reflective practitioners in the classroom, and not purveyors of expert-driven facts and dualistic thinking. Rather, there is a need for individuals who can think and teach with the complexity needed for facilitating tolerance for ill-defined client populations.

5. Considerations for Diverse Learners and Multicultural Implications

Counselor educators face many demands when teaching graduate courses, including the need to provide counseling students with safe and empowering classroom environments. Teaching within counselor education serves two prime directives: (1) to prepare competent counselors (at the master’s level), and (2) to prepare advanced practitioners, supervisors, and counselor educators (at the doctoral level). In so doing, counselor educators need to explicitly address social justice and diversity issues through their own self-study and experiences, modeling competence for students, delivering culturally-relevant content, fostering a culturally-sensitive learning environment, and supporting students’ intellectual engagement with culturally competent curriculum and diverse peers (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002).

Aspiring counselor educators need to develop pedagogies that acknowledge counseling students’ diverse backgrounds and learning needs. (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002). After all, counselor educators are training students to be culturally competent counselors for diverse clientele. To achieve this learning outcome, counselor educators need to be able to facilitate culturally-informed learning processes for their students. Gay (2010) described culturally competent counselor educators as orchestrators of social contexts in their respective classrooms (italics in original). Orchestrators of social contexts (i.e., classrooms) recognize the influence culture has on the learning process and help students “translate their cultural competencies (and experiences) into school learning resources” (p. 45).

6. Unanswered Questions/Future Directions

Counselor educators considering implications for teaching and mentorship of CE students in teaching should consider two key questions, beginning with: How did I learn how to teach? This question is particularly important given faculty members’ propensity to mentor others the way they themselves were mentored (Hall & Burns, 2009). Next, What is the doctoral student’s previous experience with teaching? It is critical for faculty members to know before they present
teaching opportunities to CE doctoral students as CE students may need to be progressively socialized into teaching roles.

CE doctoral students can also engage in self-assessment. A guided reflection approach with an experienced faculty supervisor can be helpful to students as they ponder their teaching competencies (Baltrinic et al., 2016; Hall & Hulse, 2010; Orr et al., 2008). Some additional considerations and questions are offered to assist with guided reflection:

1. What classes and types of classes do I feel prepared to teach? Why? Where do I feel less prepared? Why?

2. What are my strengths and weaknesses as an instructor? How can I utilize my strengths and/or find resources/support for areas of challenge?

3. Whom do I consider “master” teachers in counselor education? Why? What are they doing that is effective?

7. Unanswered Questions/ Future Research:

1. To what extent do new counselor educators feel prepared to teach? Upon what do they base their perceived competence?

2. What do CEs consider to be “critical incidents” in their development as instructors? Why? How can these pivotal experiences be intentionally included in preparation programs?

3. What are current preparation programs doing to promote doctoral student efficacy and skills in teaching? What are they not doing?

4. How are doctoral students being prepared to teach in traditional, hybrid, and online programs?

5. Where are new counselor educators going for support, remediation or challenge when it comes to their teaching?

6. How do counselor educators develop and grow their instructional strategies over time?

7. What preparation strategies are most effective for supporting new counselor educators’ development in teaching?

8. What teaching preparation strategies do counselor educators consider most and least impactful on their development?

9. To what degree do current CACREP (2016) standards capture knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for effective teaching practice in counselor education?
10. To what degree are counselor educators who engaged in formal preparation for teaching more or less effective compared to counselor educators who did not engage in formal preparation for teaching?

8. References


Section Four
Assessment of Student Learning

Author: Casey A. Barrio Minton
Reviewer: Caroline Perjessy

1. Overview of Topic and Relationship to Counselor Education

The last three decades have marked the age of accountability in higher education with state and federal governments, accrediting bodies, and the public at large calling for institutions of higher education to be clear and transparent regarding their effectiveness (Ewell, 2009). Today, all regional accrediting bodies and the Council for Higher Education Accrediting body (CHEA) (CHEA, 2010; Provezis, 2010) require institutions to report on performance, including providing evidence of learning attained by students. In 2009, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) incorporated student learning outcomes (SLOs) into its standards, requiring accredited programs to demonstrate assessment of SLOs at both individual student and programmatic levels. This attention to SLO assessment was refined in the 2016 CACP Standard, and counselor educators appear to be shifting from wondering if we should assess SLOs to how SLOs should be assessed.

Quality SLO assessment goes well beyond meeting documentation requirements (Kuh et al., 2015). Rather, it helps counselor educators answer fundamental questions about counselor preparation. Specifically, how are counselor educators helping to develop professional counselors who are highly skilled? How does their work in the classroom matter to the well-being of the clients and students served by professional counselors? And, finally, how can they continually develop classroom practices to promote optimal student, and client, development?

This brief includes an overview of key principles related to assessment of student learning, accreditation standards regarding assessment of learning, and five options for assessing SLOs at course and program levels. We will provide key resources for understanding the SLO assessment process as a whole and specific options that can help counselor educators assess SLOs in a meaningful way.

2. Relevant Research and Literature Support

There is relatively little research in counselor education regarding assessment of student learning and learning outcomes attained by new professional counselors. Even the rich, growing body of teaching literature in our profession focuses primarily on conceptual pieces, often with incorporation of instructor experiences and reflections (Barrio Minton, Wachter Morris, & Yaites, 2014). Barrio Minton and colleagues found that only 10% of 230 peer-reviewed articles focused on teaching in counselor education incorporated attention to direct evidence of student learning. Although there are many well-informed ideas about how counselor educators might promote student learning, the body of literature on actual learning or impact of SLO assessment on the counselor development process is in its infancy.
There is empirical evidence from higher education in general that good SLO assessment can be used to inform teaching and promote student learning (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Normal, 2010; Malott, Hall, Sheely-Moore, Krell, & Cardaciotto, 2014). In particular, well-crafted formative assessments can help instructors and students identify areas of strength and areas needing greater attention. With appropriate supports and timely feedback, instructors can use SLO assessment practices to adjust teaching and support greater learning as a whole.

The following resources may be helpful for understanding how quality of SLO assessment promotes learning for students:


The 2016 CACREP Standards include clear guidance regarding SLO requirements within accredited programs. Within Section 4 of the standards are two primary areas of focus: evaluation of programs and assessment of students. Standards regarding program evaluation include attention to the program as a whole and require that “…programs have a documented, empirically based plan for systematically evaluating the program objectives, including student learning…” (p. 16, 4.A) The standards later specify the need for attention to student knowledge, skills, and dispositions in addition to measures of program quality such as demographic data, alumni follow-up studies, site supervisor feedback, program employer feedback, pass rates on credentialing examination, completion rates, and job placement rates. Thus, program faculty may use the activities noted in the application section to determine aggregate performance of students in the program.

CareP 2016 Standards requiring assessment of individual students require that the counselor educator program faculty systematically assesses each student’s progress throughout the program by examining student learning in relation to a combination of knowledge and skills. The assessment process includes the following: (1) identification of key performance indicators of student learning in each of the eight core areas and in each student’s respective specialty area(s) (for doctoral programs, each of the five doctoral core areas), (2) measurement of student learning conducted via multiple measures and over multiple points in time, and (3) review or analysis of data (p. 16, 4.F). The standards go on to note the same requirement for assessment of student dispositions and the connection of this process to student retention, remediation, and dismissal practices (see Section Eight: Student Support and Remediation). The activities noted below may be useful in
understanding specific students’ learning within courses and activities and throughout the program as a whole.

The assessment process as a whole is beyond the practice of this brief. However, readers may find the following resources helpful for understanding the big picture of assessing student learning:


The literature includes attention to a number of scholarly and practical resources counselor educators and administrators can use to align SLOs to course and program curriculum as a whole, write quality SLOs, develop assignments or activities in which students engage, and construct measures to evaluate student performance. The following section includes an overview of overall process and practical summaries of five SLO assessment activities: course-based assignments, field experiences, comprehensive examinations, portfolios, and dissertations. It concludes with attention to key principles for constructing measures to assess learning.

3. Application

As noted in Section Ten: Program Structure and Curriculum Sequencing, optimal learning occurs when educators begin with the end in mind. Whether working with a within-course unit, course, or program, counselor educators should first specify what students should know or be able to do when learning is successful. These will be the outcomes -- knowledge, skills, or dispositions -- upon which instructors will design courses and experiences. Educators may look to a variety of sources for specifying SLOs including, but not limited to, accreditation standards, licensure and certification requirements, best practice documents, competency standards, professional literature, and faculty professional judgement (Barrio Minton, Gibson, & Wachter Morris, 2016). SLOs should be operationalized so they are
specific, observable, and measurable. Readers may find the following resources helpful for articulating SLOs:


Upon articulating expected SLOs, counselor educators develop curricula (e.g., readings/viewings, lectures, experiences, and activities) designed to facilitate learning regarding the SLOs. These teaching activities are explored across this series of briefs. Within and following learning experiences, counselor educators design opportunities for students to demonstrate knowledge, skills, or dispositions. These opportunities may be formative or summative in nature. Formative assessment involves providing intentionally-timed feedback at key points in development to aid in the process of teaching and learning. Summative assessment involves a single snapshot of learning, often at culmination or key transitions within learning experiences. Generally summative in nature, assessment of SLOs provides opportunities for students to show their skills in the most complex, authentic manner possible (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2008; Mueller, 2014).

The following sources may be helpful for considering the more general nature of alignment of SLOs and curriculum.


Counselor educators will generally find themselves using a combination of five primary assessment tools: course-based assessments, field experiences, theses/dissertations,
comprehensive examinations, and portfolios (Barrio Minton et al., 2016; Barrio Minton & Gibson, 2012). Educators assessing learning at the course level will use all course-based assessments; however, they may find themselves creating course-level field experiences, examinations, or portfolios. Educators select assessment tools using a variety of considerations related to student development, program culture, instructor philosophy, and pragmatic considerations. The following pages include highlights of key considerations for various activities and provide resources for further exploration.

**Course-based assessments** are grounded within specific courses or units and include a wide range of activities such as course quizzes and examinations, homework, papers, presentations, observations, simulations, and other course-based activities. In quality course design, each SLO will have at least one corresponding assessment that will allow the instructor to identify individual and aggregate student learning in that area (Barrio Minton et al., 2016). In some cases, instructors may have multiple assessments related to a single SLO; at other times, instructors may use just one assessment to evaluate multiple SLOs. The benefits of course-based assessments include instructor and student familiarity, clear responsibility for assessment, proximity to learning activities, and ease of assessing knowledge outcomes. On the other hand, instructors will need to work to make assessments as authentic and complex as possible. Instructors who rely heavily on examinations should consider carefully the validity and rigor of the examination used. The following tools are helpful for developing course-based assessments:

- Website: Authentic Assessment Toolbox
  [http://jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/index.htm](http://jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/index.htm)

**Field experiences** such as course-based service learning activities, practicum, and internship allow authentic opportunities for assessing students’ development of skills. The benefits of field experiences include authenticity in learning challenges, opportunity for skill development, engagement of others in learning experiences, and opportunity for reflection on practice. On the other hand, field experiences are time-intensive for students, supervisors, and faculty members alike, and they often vary in quality and opportunity for students. The following resources are helpful for developing field experiences:


**Comprehensive examinations** allow counselor education faculty to assess student knowledge and some degree of skill across the curriculum as a whole. Individual faculty
members may also apply these principles to course-level examinations. Often, examinations are rituals that mark important transitions between experiences and topics. These examinations may be standardized or unstandardized, objective and/or subjective, and authentic and/or inauthentic in nature. Most counselor education programs utilize comprehensive examinations as part of program requirements (Baggerly & Osborn, 2013), and these examinations are attractive to programs given the relatively time efficient nature of administration and scoring; if well-designed, these examinations can also approximate certification or licensure requirements (Barrio Minton et al., 2016). On the down side, examinations tend to be high stakes, may not present authentic workplace demands, and may not always capture students’ best performance, especially for those who are ill, have test anxiety, or have learning disabilities or language challenges. The following resources are useful for considering how to construct meaningful, authentic examinations within counselor education programs:

- Cornell Center for Teaching Excellence Test Construction Manual
- Constructing written test questions for the basic and clinical sciences
- Michigan State University Scoring Office
  [https://www.msu.edu/dept/soweb/writitem.html](https://www.msu.edu/dept/soweb/writitem.html)

**Portfolios** “embody an organized, purposeful, longitudinal collection of student work that tells a story of the student’s efforts, progress, or achievement in a given area” (Swigonski, Ward, Mama, Rodgers, & Belicose, 2006, p. 813). Portfolios are common throughout counselor education programs (Baggerly & Osborn, 2013) and allow for application at specific course levels. Portfolios are amenable to assessing knowledge, skills, and dispositions and may be flexible or fixed in content, thus allowing flexible application depending on course or program needs. Faculty members may ask students to include a wide range of learning artifacts in portfolios including letters (to self, readers, or hypothetical clients) or reflective statements, papers, programs or projects created, sample sessions, and evaluations from supervisors or clients. Portfolios tend to involve a great deal of student investment, can be flexible, allowing for creative expression, and may have use in the job search (Barrio Minton, et al., 2016). Complexity and investment of time by students and faculty may make portfolios less attractive. The following resources may be helpful for considering how to construct and evaluate meaningful portfolios:

Assessment (NILOA).


**Dissertations** are used as culminating assessment activities doctoral programs, and theses may be used as culminating activities for some master’s-level programs. Counselor educators may apply principles from this type of assessment to major course-based research or writing assignments. As learning activities, theses and dissertations require synthesis of academic knowledge, skill in writing, and development of a degree of autonomy on behalf of the student. Although theses and dissertations may reflect deep levels of learning among students and are authentic assessments for those who expect to enter academia, this activity requires substantial student and faculty investment and may not be authentic for those who expect to enter clinical settings (Barrio Minton et al., 2016; Burke & Snead, 2014).

Educators who use theses/dissertations as learning assessments may find the following resources helpful in the development process:


After counselor educators have determined what students should be able to know and do, developed curricula to promote specified knowledge and skills, and designed assessment activities that allow students to demonstrate learning in authentic ways, it is time to evaluate student performance. Typically, evaluation of student performance requires development of
a rubric or observation form on which faculty members rate various elements of performance. Rubrics are structured in nature and require that counselor educators delineate expectations for the assignment (i.e., evaluation criteria), specify levels of performance or quality definitions, and consider how and whether the rubric will be utilized to generate a grade for the assessment activity. There are a number of resources available to assist counselor educators in developing rubrics, with tutorials embedded in many learning management systems and widely available throughout the internet. Good rubrics, however, also take into consideration issues of reliability, validity, and quality of feedback to student.

The following resources may be helpful for developing rubrics:


Readers find the above resources helpful for considering how to articulate expectations for student learning, design opportunities for students to showcase their SLOs, and develop rubrics to evaluate student learning. As noted previously, there is empirical evidence to indicate that quality feedback and assessment processes promote student learning (Ambrose et al., 2010; Malott et al., 2014). Key influences appear to include student perceptions of supportive context, provision of specific feedback that allows subsequent modification and expansion on more complex assignments, and instructor use of feedback to customize teaching strategies. In short, meaning-making is the final and most crucial step to the assessment process for student and instructor alike. Once instructors invest the effort to align SLOs and assessments, we hope they will take the final step to use individual and aggregate assessment results to assess and modify teaching in ways that are responsive to student needs.
4. Considerations for Diverse Learners and Multicultural Implications

Counselor educators consider the needs of diverse learners as they design assessment activities and rubrics. In compliance with federal law, instructors must consider accommodations for students who have documented disabilities that may constrain learning. Counselor educators who are striving for cultural competence also consider whether some groups of students may have more comfort or familiarity with assessment strategies than others. Reflection may include consideration of collaborative and individualistic strategies, role of stereotype threat in student performance, and cultural appropriateness of expectations for self-disclosure. Counselor educators may examine assessment results in efforts to identify characteristics of students who tend to perform well or struggle on specific activities. If disparities become apparent, counselor educators should consider ways in which they may offer additional support and/or modify classroom environments, learning activities, and assignments to allow all students opportunity for success in their classrooms and programs.

Although teaching strategies are beyond the scope of this brief, counselor educators may find that allowing multiple opportunities for student feedback, utilizing multiple assessment types, and offering students choice in some assignments allows them to reach a diverse student body. Given ethical (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014) and accreditation (CACREP, 2016) expectations for attention to issues of diversity across all courses and experiences, counselor educators should also consider how they may build attention to culture into all course assessments.

5. Ethical Implications

The Code of Ethics (ACA, 2014) and 2016 CACREP Standards require that counselor educators set clear expectations for students, provide formative and summative assignments, and only endorse those students who capable of providing effective, ethical service to clients. The CACREP 2016 standards provide a framework for assessing SLOs within all core curricular areas, program curriculum, and field experiences. Thus, counselor educators who comply with the standards place themselves in positions to use empirically-based data to assess student knowledges, skills, and dispositions needed to proceed in the program and the profession. When counselor educators identify students who do not meet expectations for knowledge, skills, or dispositions needed for effective practice, they have an ethical obligation to engage in developmentally and culturally sensitive remediation activities. Please see Section Eight: Student Support and Remediation for an overview of the student support and remediation process.

6. Unanswered Questions / Future Directions

As noted previously, there is little research regarding SLOs in counselor education in general, program processes related to attainment of knowledge and skills, or impact of the more recent shift to an SLO focus in counselor education. Future researchers may attend to the following unanswered questions:

- To what degree do knowledge, skills, and dispositions link to the quality of care provided to clients?
• Are specific learning activities in counselor education linked to greater acquisition of counselor knowledge, skills, and dispositions?
• What is the impact of a SLO focus on student learning in counselor education programs?
• How do optimal SLO assessment methods vary among programs offering diverse delivery formats and serving diverse student bodies?

The following related briefs may be helpful to counselor educators:
• Writing student learning outcomes
• Connecting student learning outcomes to course activities and assessments
• Developing written, course-based assignments
• Developing quizzes and examinations
• Developing service-learning and field-based experiences
• Developing presentations
• Developing course- and program-level portfolios
• Constructing evaluation rubrics

7. Resources

Given the wide range of topics included in this brief, we included resources throughout the above sections.

8. References

Burke, S. K., & Snead, J. T. (2014). Faculty opinions on the use of master’s degree end of


1. Overview of Topic and Relationship to Counselor Education

Online education has exploded in recent years, with 66% of higher education institutions including online learning as a critical part of their long-term strategy (Allen & Seaman, 2014). The reasons for increases in online education is because it provides increased access, fast delivery, potentially improved pedagogy, and decreased costs for students and institutions (Durrington, Berryhill, & Swafford, 2006; Natriello, 2005; Tabatabaei, Schrottner, & Reichgelt, 2006). Furthermore, improved student learning outcomes have been identified. A meta-analysis on students who participated in online courses perform better, on average, that those students who take the same class face-to-face (US DOE, 2009). Additionally, students who engage in “blended” courses, which are a combination of online and face-to-face instruction, appear to do the best, regardless of course level or discipline (US DOE, 2009).

Within the next 5-10 years, online education will be “full scale”, which indicates that online technologies for teaching and learning will become a routine, and commonplace, part of the educational experience (Sener, 2010). This means that practically all higher education students will experience online education in some form during their collegiate career. In addition, online courses will comprise a sizable proportion (20 percent or more) of the total credit hours in higher education (Sener, 2010). Consequently, it is imperative that counselor educators not only strive for competence in their online delivery, but aim for excellence. This brief attempts to offer some practical and specific ways to deliver a high quality, online educational experience for counseling students.

The counselor education field has, over the years, evolved to include fully online CACREP-accredited counseling programs. Studies exploring the use of computer-enhanced counselor education began in 1984 (e.g., Alpert, 1986; Harris-Bowlsby, 1984). Since then, many advances have been made in the technology field, allowing for more and improved counseling courses that require sophisticated delivery systems, technologically advanced counselor educators, and a willingness to grapple with some of the nuances that technology poses counselor educators. With improved delivery systems, CACREP accreditation offered to online programs (CACREP, 2001), and competent counselor educators who teach online, students can now experience a high quality online counselor education program.

Despite these advances in online education within counselor education, there is limited research in counselor education relative to online education. This is partly because many counselor educators, who value relationships within the educational context, find the use of technology to be inconsistent with the development of these relationships (Hall, Neilson, Nielson & Buchholz, 2010). Additionally, the skills needed in counselors-in-training to demonstrate can be difficult to do so in an online setting, and counselor educators are not compensated for the additional time and training it requires for them to gain the necessary technological skills to create an effective online course that might be able to adequately demonstrate such skills (Wantz, Tromski,
Mortsolf, Yoxtheimer, Brill, and Cole, 2003). These limitations create some ambivalence surrounding the topic of online counselor education. Nonetheless, counselor education programs are continuing to pursue online course offerings and degrees with CACREP demonstrating acceptance of this format by offering accreditation to those programs which adhere to the standard while delivering completely online and thus, it behooves counselor educators to understand the available best practices surrounding online education and pedagogy.

2. Relevant Research and Literature Support

As stated, there is minimal literature related to online learning within the counselor education field and it is beyond the scope of this brief to provide an exhaustive overview of all the literature related to online education, however, the literature regarding online education appears to focus on some significant themes related to student and instructor characteristics relative to successful outcomes of online learning.

Student and Instructor Characteristics. Those pursuing a graduate degree in counseling are adult learners; they have different instructional needs and are focused on advanced content and skill development for a specific professional field (Seligman, 2012). Andragogy, an adult learning theory, is based on four key assumptions: self-concept, adult learner experience, orientation to learning, readiness to learn, and motivation to learn (Knowles, 1973, 1984). Knowles (1984) asserted that since adults are intrinsically motivated toward learning, their motivation is based on their need to learn content that relates to their adult roles and responsibilities. Adult learners seek ways to incorporate their knowledge with practical skills. Gansemer-Topf, Ross, and Johnson (2006) suggested that graduate students learn best when there is a combination of knowledge acquisition, personal investment of energy and time, and involvement with peers and faculty. Graduate education requires an appreciation for the flexible nature of knowledge (Gunzenhauser & Gerstl-Pepin, 2006). As a result, online instruction must incorporate an awareness of the student’s roles and responsibilities in their lives, while also delivering content in a way that is meaningful and relevant to the student. Discussion questions, classroom activities and assignments should all draw from the student’s experiences. This helps connect the material to the student, and the students to one another. Certain characteristics, or habits, can help students be more successful in an online course. Ekong (2006) found in their research survey results on counseling graduate students that personal characteristics, such as good time management skills, the ability to persist, and strong motivation, were all key factors for the online counseling students that facilitated learning.

The research on which instructor characteristics provide a better educational experience is more substantial. Despite the longevity of online education, the generational gap amongst students and some instructors remains quite large, and many educators did not grow up in the digital age. This requires a willingness of counselor educators to embrace modes of delivery that are not completely familiar to them. As such, additional training and education are needed to improve delivery of an online course. Instructor characteristics such as these can impact the learning outcomes of counselor education students. The most important elements that facilitated learning were related to instructor characteristics, such as timely feedback, clear expectations on assignments, and frequency of forum participation (Ekong, 2006). These favorable instructor characteristics were found in much of the research related to best practices of online educators
Research on effective online teaching reveals that online courses need collaborative (active) learning and strong instructor presence (Dixson, 2010). One study that qualitatively explored the characteristics of exemplary online educators found them to be challengers, affirmers, and influencers (Perry & Edwards, 2004). Students reported that educators who demonstrated these qualities helped them to utilize more critical thinking skills, improve the quality of their assignments, have a more positive learning experience by feeling validated and respected, and influenced them significantly. Other researchers, in describing exemplary online teaching approaches, found those instructors to be prompt, present, organized, respectful, encouraging towards students, and creative (Conrad, 2003); that they often fostered interaction, were enthusiastic and organized throughout the course, provided prompt feedback (Lewis & Abdul-Hamid, 2006); and that they included learning activities that promoted online student interaction and community building (Lee, 2008; Cole, 2009). Mowrer-Reynolds (2008) identified that exemplary teachers value what their students express, demonstrate respect for their students, are enthusiastic, humorous, provide assistance outside of the classroom, and help promote student self-esteem. Clearly, then, instructor presence and quality of interaction has a vital role in the student learning experience of an online classroom.

3. Application

Some definitions relative to online learning are important for counselor educators to know. Distance education is a broad term used to explain how teaching is done using technology and when students are not physically present in the classroom. Video or audio conferencing can be used as a means to meet *synchronously*, or occurring or existing at the same time (Merriam Webster.com). When using video or teleconferencing, students can report to satellite classrooms to participate in the course where they can see other students and the instructor (Woodford, Rokutani, Gressard, & Berg, 2001). This practice is exemplified by the Counselor Education department of North Dakota State University, which uses an interactive video network (IVN) that is state wide and offered at more than 300 community and school sites in North Dakota (Hall, Nielson, Nelson, Buchholz, 2010). Here, students can attend any of the satellite locations to engage in group supervision and for other courses.

Counseling’s emphasis and reliance on interpersonal relationships is not removed from the online environment. Students (and counselor educators) still want to feel connected to the material and one another. The technology, without adequate preparation, can impede the formation of these relationships and inhibit student learning. Therefore, it is important for both students and counselor educators to develop and expand their technological skills and comfort level. It is important to realize that depending on the instructor’s platform, discussion boards can be conducted via video chats, such as through Google Hangouts. Similarly, role plays demonstrating theories, skills, and other learning outcomes can be done through Google Hangouts, Skype, or GoTo Meeting, amongst others.

Some technology-related resources that may be of benefit are the following:
• Websites such as ScreenCastOMatic (http://www.screencast-o-matic.com/), Udutu (http://www.udutu.com/), and Jing (http://jing.en.softonic.com/) offer free software for creating interactive and visually appealing tutorials.

• Google Hangouts https://hangouts.google.com/, which can provide a means to record role plays, have interactive lectures/discussions, or conduct presentations.

• Websites, such as the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (http://learn.nctsn.org/course/index.php?categoryid=3), the KIDS Count Data Center (http://datacenter.kidscount.org/), CACREP (http://www.cacrep.org/) are all helpful resources for students to access.

The research indicates that best practices in learning usually involve active learning. Active learning is an excellent way to reach these goals and is easily transferable to an online setting. Active learning engages students in two aspects—doing things and thinking about what they are doing (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). Some examples of active learning strategies include the following: reflection activities, small group work, discussions, peer evaluation, problem-solving exercises, and responding to short demonstration videos. All of these activities can be done in an online classroom, however, it requires intentionality and creativity on the part of the instructor.

There are many pathways through which to facilitate active learning in an online format. Some methods include interactive multimedia presentations, demonstration videos, web-based activities, discussion boards, group projects, and case studies. However, as with all educational practices, there are ways to approach these interventions that optimally enhance active learning. The following are some recommendations for applying active learning teaching interventions.

• Videos, narrated lectures, and podcasts should ideally be brief in length, as the adult attention span tends to be 20 minutes or less (Kohn, 2014). For longer multimedia learning tools, instructors may be able to incorporate brief activities at intervals, such as asking them to pause the playback and conduct a brief web-search.

• Demonstration videos can be a useful tool for assessing student skill development. They also provide an opportunity for students to actively engage the material and take ownership of their learning. Students may demonstrate the skills with a willing partner, or may simply pretend that they are talking with a client. Demonstration videos can be brief and instructors may consider providing audio feedback, to make the learning experience more personal.

• Web-based activities, such as tutorial trainings, webinars, and web-searches, can be used to help active engage students in an online course. Websites, such as the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (http://learn.nctsn.org/course/index.php?categoryid=3), offer free webinars on a variety of subjects, including assessment of trauma in children. Instructors may also consider creating a tutorial for certain topics. Finally, web-based scavenger hunts are a fun way to connect students to course material and peek their interest in the topic. They may even read and learn more than intended!
• Make discussion boards personal. Have discussion boards center around personal/professional experiences with an integration of specific content knowledge. This may facilitate improved assimilation and accommodation.

• Establish parameters surrounding discussion board posts, to generate genuine dialogue. For instance, instructors may require that students cannot read others post prior to responding-“must post first” format. Instructors may also request that students use audio clips, rather than typed messages, to respond to their peers. Faculty responses via audio clips may also help to improve the sense of instructor presence in the class. These can be done via Google Hangouts https://hangouts.google.com/, or, through the platform used by the university.

• Small group work can be a successful modality for encouraging active student engagement in an online course. However, there are some major considerations to make prior to implementation, and structures should be put into place to minimize the challenges of online group work. Naturally, group size is a major factor. Groups of three may be most effective for a number of reasons: members are more likely to be able to arrange their schedules to find mutually agreeable meeting times; in groups of three, there is heightened accountability for completing one’s assigned tasks; there is an odd number of people, which can facilitate voting and decision-making; and there are not so many members that each one is not intimately familiar with the overall project.

• Case studies are an ideal application-based active learning strategy. However, it is important to scaffold learning when using case studies. This may take the form of using a case study as a cumulative assignment, so that instructors have covered each component individually in the preceding course material. Additionally, it may be helpful to include a peer review component, so that students consult with their peer “treatment team” to brainstorm options and synthesize the data. Depending on the platform used will determine how to divide student groups and ensuing “treatment teams”.

4. Considerations for Diverse Learners and Multicultural Implications

As with any student, counseling students have varying instructional needs and learning styles. It is important that instructors remain sensitive to the various learning styles of their students and adapt the classroom as necessary. Additionally, given the background of the student, they may or may not have the ease with technology that others do. If students are seeking additional information on an assignment after being given written instructions, it might be helpful to create a Jing video for those purposes. Students with disabilities face unique challenges in an online environment. For example, videos and lectures must be ADA-compliant, with close captioning and or/narrated for students with visual and auditory impairments. Furthermore, rubrics, clear guidelines on assignments, and multiple sources of accessing the same information, can help all students be successful. Some graduate students, who might not be “digital natives”, can struggle with the technology involved with the course. It is imperative they be provided resources for technology support and ways to seek help, if needed.
5. Ethical Implications

The ACA Code of Ethics, in keeping up with the expansion of online counseling services and education, has provided guidance to counselors and educators related to Distance Counseling, Technology, and Social Media (Section H, ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). It is beyond the scope of this brief to cover all of the ethical implications for both counselor educators and licensed clinicians who provide online counseling services; however, it behooves counselor educators and all students to familiarize themselves with these ethical guidelines. Guidance is offered on how to conduct supervision online, ways to protect client confidentiality, and describes how to provide accommodations to individuals with disabilities seeking counseling services online.

The following resources are helpful for understanding ethical implications relevant to online counselor education:

- The federal government’s website for complete information on ADA requirements is www.ada.gov.
- For encrypting USB drives when using them for recordings during Practicum and Internship, reference this article: “How Encryption Works” at www.howstuffworks.com/encryption.htm.
- Counselors must now strive to provide website translation capabilities for clients who have a different primary language. Check out www.freetranslation.com.
- The newly revised ACA Ethical Standards Casebook by Barbara Herlihy and Gerald Corey (available at www.counseling.org/publications or 800.347.6647 ext. 222) gives helpful examples covering each of the points in Standard A.12. NBCC (National Board for Certified Counselors) provides a training program that leads to the credential of distance credentialed counselors.

6. Unanswered Questions/Future Directions

As noted previously, there is little research regarding online teaching and learning within counselor education. Future researchers may attend to the following unanswered questions:

- Are specific learning activities in online counselor education courses linked to greater acquisition of counselor knowledge, skills, and dispositions?
- What is the impact of online learning on student learning in counselor education programs?
- What are the differences in learning outcomes between online and traditional counselor education programs?
- How can the counselor education profession develop exemplary online counselor educators?

The following related briefs may be helpful to counselor educators:

- Developing exemplary online counselor educators
- Creating online assignments for specific CACREP standards
- Considering the ethical implications for students who are in online programs
7. References


KIDS Count Data Center (http://datacenter.kidscount.org/)


Section Six

Developing a Teaching Philosophy

Author: David M. Kleist
Reviewer: Susannah M. Wood

1. Overview of the topic and its relationship to counselor education

Developing a philosophy of teaching in counselor education is an issue not simply of the present but steeped in the field of counselor education’s roots. Upon cursory review of the early years of the ACES’ journal, Counselor Education and Supervision (CES), one discovers the call for research on the effectiveness of counselor education (Bixler, 1963; Litwack, 1964), proposals for a conceptual framework (i.e., philosophy, and theory) organizing the education of counselors (Kiesow, 1963; Landsman, 1963), along with examples of “techniques” utilized by counselor educators in the selection and training of counselors (e.g., Cheney, 1963). Move forward fifty plus years, the most recent editor of Counselor Education and Supervision opines “the one topic remarkably absent in the literature published in CES, a journal about counselor education, is pedagogy” (Korcuska, 2016, p.156), which suggests the conceptual foundation of counselor education and supervision contains “structural weaknesses underneath teaching and supervision practices” (p.156). Barrio Minton, Wachter Morris, and Yaites (2014) conducted a 10-year content analysis of CES articles on pedagogy and found an overabundance (75%) of articles on teaching techniques. The lack of attention to philosophies and theories of pedagogy is glaring.

We have succeeded as a field for over 50 years in constructing and disseminating knowledge on the pragmatics of training counselors, primarily, and secondarily, counselor educators and supervisors. Our success can be framed within a pragmatic stance, but clearly not within a philosophical, or more directly, a theoretically grounded one. As Litwack (1964) asserted “We need a healthy spirit of planned and systematized experimentation during which we continually evaluate ourselves and our results. In substance, we need to assume the true role of an educator if we are to consider ourselves members of a profession” (p. 45)

Doctoral students in counselor education and supervision speak to the role, and act, of teaching as the reason for choosing doctoral study in counselor education and supervision. From the reviews mentioned above, the scant literature available to students of counselor education and supervision, and counselor educators and supervisors themselves, informs the “what” of educating without an understanding of the “how” and “why” of educating. Beyond the need to have a conceptual framework (i.e., philosophy and theory) to guide the process and intentionality of educating, is the obvious lack of research-supported philosophies and theories of instruction in counselor education and supervision.

The paradox of writing about the process of developing a teaching philosophy, or theory, of teaching is the reality this process has neither been researched nor conceptualized within the context of counselor education and supervision. As has been communicated in the Preface, the profession of counselor education has borrowed numerous concepts and theories from related professions. In the context of teaching philosophy, and theory, we borrow heavily from
education, and educational psychology. What follows comes from education, and science education, via the work of Schonwetter, Sokal, Friesen, and Taylor (2002), and Schussler et al. (2011), respectively. Schonwetter et al. provide the following operational definition of a teaching philosophy statement as, “a systematic and critical rationale that focuses on the important components defining effective teaching and learning in a particular discipline and/or institutional context” (p. 84).

2. Relevant Research and Literature Support

The counseling profession values the integration of theory, skill, and personhood in the role of counselor. The same can be said for the role of counselor educator and supervisor. As one develops professionally as a counselor educator so to develops the person, and vice versa. A development framework is a hallmark of the counseling profession and informs our understanding or the roles of counselor, educator, and supervisor. It thus follows that as episodes of teaching pass, along with evaluation of each teaching episode, new areas of growth and development will follow. We know that a counselor’s development will transition from utilizing one theory to an integrative stance melding multiple counseling theories as years of practice unfold. Though research on the development of a counselor educator’s instructional theory over time has not yet been conducted, we can surmise from literature on counselor development that a similar process may unfold, moving from a singular instructional theory toward a more complex, integrative instructional theory.

The work of Schussler et al. (2011) supports a developmental process for an educator’s instructional theory. Graduate students in various biological sciences were involved in a study to explore what influences changes in their teaching philosophies. First, changes in focus occurred from teacher-centered to student-centered, and technical to personal language utilized in the statements. Over the course of a semester in which a class on teaching was taken, statements communicated less as to what they as teachers do toward emphasis on what is attended to with students and their process of learning. Regarding the language used to describe their teaching, as the semester progressed less technical theory-related language was used and more language involving personal examples of one’s teaching theory in action. Of more importance to Schussler et al. was what contributed to these changes.

Three main themes were conceptualized to explain the process of change within a student’s teaching statement. First, and most critical in importance according to the study’s student participants, was exposure to a variety of instructional theories. Learning multiple instructional theories provided a variety of conceptual frameworks to understand their role, and actions, as teachers. Over time issues of theoretical fit were tailored and the language of theories was more precisely used to describe their actions, and intentions, as educators. Second, students mentioned exposure to faculty discussions on the relationship to well-articulated teaching statements and successful job interviews. Hearing from faculty the value placed on an applicant’s ability to communicate their instructional theory provided real world support for the development of a teaching statement as more than an academic exercise. Last, was having their evolving teaching statements receive feedback from faculty. Each round of feedback provided refinement of the teaching statement into one that was both theoretically efficient, and personal.
The implications for the field of counselor education and supervision is clear: a stand-alone class on instructional theory and pedagogy is essential to the development of competent and intentional counselor educators and supervisors. Despite the value of having a class on teaching, instructional theory, and pedagogy seeming obvious, a cursory review in 2013 by a group of doctoral students at my institution of CACREP doctoral program’s websites, only 50% clearly communicated having a separate doctoral level class focused on teaching. Without such a class the only theoretical background a student of counselor education has to conceptualize their teaching against are counseling theories. Though parallels may exist, and some concepts transferable, the act and process of counseling is not the same as the act and process of teaching.

3. Application: What Developing a Philosophy and Theory of Teaching Looks Like in Action

Based upon review of the literature and their own research, Schonwetter et al. have developed a 6 component model for developing a teaching philosophy statement. For the sake of this brief, each stage will be briefly introduced and the reader is directed to go to the original material for more detail.

Stage 1: Definition of Teaching

What seems to be an obvious first step, though necessary, is to develop a conceptual description of what it means to teach, what teaching looks like with clear examples, and its relationship to Stage 2: Definition of Learning. Though Schonwetter et al. encourage the integration of personal experiences of teaching, the views of colleagues, and relevant literature to inform one’s definition of teaching, there is a need to more firmly ground a definition of teaching within a theoretical framework. As outlined in their definition of teaching philosophy, it is informed by one’s particular discipline.

As counselor educators and supervisors we expect more from our counselors in training, and professional counselors in describing their method of counseling than being only broadly a “philosophy of counseling” or merely comprised of a personal stance based upon experience. As a profession, we articulate that an ethical counselor utilizes techniques, modalities, and models that are grounded in theory and/or have an empirical foundation (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014). The same expectation should be expected of a doctoral graduate in counselor education and supervision. In short, the first stage of a teaching statement should be grounded in one’s theory of teaching, or one’s “instructional theory.”

Stage 2: Definition of Learning

In many ways the first two stages could be combined into one due to their relationship but it is relevant to put forward a distinct description of learning, first. What comprises one’s view of learning is again linked to formal learning theory and its relational congruence with the theoretical formulation of teaching. As learning can be akin to change in counseling, we can think of how we know when change, or learning, has taken place with students.
Stage 3: View of the Learner.

One’s instructional theory again forms the foundation for understanding the learner in the process of educating. Instructional theories can vary, but will discuss what learner characteristics, and learning styles, impact learning and how these characteristics and styles interact with one’s view of teaching, and role of educator.

Stage 4: Goal and Expectations of the Teacher-Student Relationship.

The teacher-student relationship is central to the process of educating. Each instructional theory will frame the dynamic between teacher and student to some degree similarly, and differently. One’s theoretical description of this relationship will be articulated against the backdrop of how learning and teaching is influenced by both student and teacher in relationship.

Stage 5: Discussion of Teaching Methods.

Once the human components of the educative process are articulated in stages 1-4 above, communication of teaching methods can now take place. Here is where the knowledge base of counselor education and supervision is rich, as mentioned previously. Now, however, the teaching methods can be more firmly embedded in an instructional theory that addresses all the human components of the learning process, and their relationship to teaching and learning.

Stage 6: Discussion of Evaluation.

In formulating one’s instructional theory, evaluation of both teaching and learning is necessary. More is needed than just reflecting on whether one’s instructional theory has been followed. Communication of how one goes about evaluating their teaching effectiveness is imperative. Similarly, merely following one’s instructional theory does not equate to knowing learning has taken place. Each instructional theory will formulate methods for evaluating student learning.

For all stages, specific examples of each component of the educative process can be given to breathe life into one’s instructional theory statement. As with one’s counseling theory, one’s instructional theory can be expected to change over time.

3. Considerations for Diverse Learners and Multicultural Implications

The importance of attending to diverse learners in counselor education and supervision parallels its importance in working with diversity in counseling contexts. As counselor educators and supervisors we challenge our counselors in training to explore the explanatory power of their chosen counseling theories with diverse clientele. The same must be true as we assist doctoral students in counselor education and supervision in the development of their instructional theory. Within the development of their instructional theory emphasis is placed on the learner, and the
learner characteristics that affect learning, and thus one’s teaching. Learner characteristics are not merely focused on age, gender, socioeconomic status but the full spectrum of cultural influences also found in counseling. Other learner characteristics of importance are a student’s history with education, their history as a student and foreknowledge of what is expected of an educational setting. Even more examples could be given but the point is clear, an educator must have a flexible instructional theory to adapt and attend to each learner’s needs and uniqueness.

As has been communicated earlier, the literature within counselor education and supervision has increasingly attended to cultural issues and experiences of students, and supervisees, but not on the impact of diversity on the instructional theories taught and utilized by counselor educators and doctoral students in counselor education programs, let alone the evaluation of their relevance and effectiveness with multiculturally diverse students. Much is yet to be done in this area to advance the conceptual framework undergirding our actions as counselor educators and supervisors with culturally diverse students.

4. Ethical Implications

The ethical implications for the field of counselor education and supervision lay bare when review of not simply the last 10 years of CES (Minton, et al., 2014) but since its inception in 1961 (the author’s review in preparation for this brief) highlight the structural weakness of the conceptual, that is theoretical, foundation upon which our teaching practices are poised (Korcuska, 2016). The irony of the present situation arises when assessing our history of knowledge construction and dissemination in our field with the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) we surface unscathed. The profession of counseling’s code of ethics is clear for counselors, under Section C.7.a, that “When providing services, counselors use techniques/procedures/modalities that are grounded in theory and/or have an empirical or scientific foundation” (p.10). However, for the practice of teaching, as a counselor educator, no such ethical mandate presently exists. To state more plainly, as a profession of counseling, and field of counselor education and supervision, we do not require, via specific ethical standard, counselor educators to use pedagogical techniques/procedures/modalities that are grounded in theory and/or have an empirical or scientific foundation.

Section F: Supervision, Training, and Teaching (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014) does begin with an aspirational introductory section that states that counselor supervisors, educators, and trainers “have theoretical and pedagogical foundations for their work; have knowledge of supervision models…” (p.12). What is uncertain from an ethical analysis perspective is whether violating an aspirational introductory statement equates to violation of a specific ethical standard. Additionally, Section F.7.a. does communicate the need for counselor educators to be “skilled as teachers and practitioners” (p.14) but specific reference to theory or scientific foundation of the skills is lacking. F.7.h is the only section related to counselor education that mentions theory. However, focus is on the counselor educator’s promotion of counseling techniques/procedures/modalities that are to be grounded in theory or an empirical foundation.

In reviewing the entirety of Section F it appears we are still navigating the conundrum described by Litwack (1964). For Litwack without a theoretical foundation for counselor education (and supervision) it appears counselor educators view themselves as counselors first, and educators
second. Such a framing for one’s role as counselor educator may lead one to engage with students potentially as clients first and students second, organizing pedagogy around counseling techniques/procedures/modalities that are grounded in counseling theories, not theories of instruction. The ethical imperative for the field of counselor education and supervision is in front of all counselor educators; the need to advocate for an ethical mandate for the practice of counselor education and supervision be grounded in theory and/or an empirical foundation.

5. Unanswered Questions/ Future Directions

The emphasis of this section has highlighted the glaring areas of omission in the counselor education and supervision literature related to instructional theories informing one’s pedagogy of counselor training. This is not to say inroads toward this end have not been embarked upon, nor theoretical frameworks put forward. Item 6 below shares some resources, and quality examples specific to counselor education to assist the reader. Yet, much work is needed to conceptualize, theorize, and research how, and why, instructional theories are applicable to the education and supervision of counselors. What follows is a list of areas needing conceptual clarity and research attention that surface from this brief.

- How does a doctoral student select an instructional theory?
- What influences the process of instructional theory selection?
- How does a counselor educator’s theory of counseling influence the selection of an instructional theory?
- What are the limits of one’s instructional theory toward the promotion of both professional and personal development?
- How does one’s instructional theory develop over time?
- What are instructional theories’ relevance for different counseling content areas (i.e., CACREP 8 core areas)?
- What is the applicability and utility of instructional theories in diverse educational settings, with diverse students and populations.

These areas for future exploration are just a small sample of teaching related inquiry needed in the field of counselor education and supervision.

6. Resources

Counselor Education-based


**Education/Educational Psychology-based**


7. **References**


Schussler, Elisabeth E.; Rowland, Freya E.; Distel, Christopher A.; Bauman, Jenise M.; Keppler, Mary L.; Kawarasaki, Yuta; McCarthy, Mirabai R.; Glover, Alicia; Salem, Hassan. (2011). Promoting the development of graduate students' teaching philosophy statements. *Journal of College Science Teaching*, 40, 32-35.
Section Seven
Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness

Author: Casey A. Barrio Minton
Reviewer: Angela Sheely-Moore

1. Overview of Topic and Relationship to Counselor Education

Assessment of teaching effectiveness is an often-discussed and commonly accepted practice throughout higher education. Assessment of teaching effectiveness is multimodel and is primarily concerned with improving teaching quality, providing a means for evaluation of faculty for personnel decisions, and serving as one indicator of institutional accountability (Spooren, Brockx, & Mortelmans, 2013). Although some practices are debated in broader dialogue, there is little question that faculty members across disciplines should be dedicated to continuous quality improvement.

Counselor educators are tasked with the preparation of graduate-level professionals who will serve the most vulnerable of client populations. Thus, counselor educators have ethical responsibilities to ensure their competence as instructors and supervisors (American Counseling Association, 2014). This brief will begin with a general overview of research and literature support related to effective teaching in higher education in general, graduate education, and counselor education specifically. Research and recommendations regarding strategies for assessing teaching effectiveness are highlighted with attention to student evaluation of teaching (SET), peer observation of teaching (POT), instructor reflection, and direct evidence of student learning.

2. Relevant Research and Literature Support

Although there is a broad body of literature related to teaching in counselor education, there is very little attention to characteristics or behaviors of effective instructors in counselor education. The scholarly literature is loaded with research related to effective K-12 and collegiate teaching, and educators are likely to become overwhelmed with the vast array of information available to support teaching. Although exploration of effective teaching strategies is beyond the scope of this brief, assessment of teaching effectiveness should begin with consideration of what effective teaching looks like. The following resources are helpful for this reflection:


There is a small, growing body of literature regarding qualities of effective graduate instructors in general and in counselor education specifically. As illustrated in the following table, student perceptions of instructor knowledge and instructional strategies used emerged as important across studies. Notably, graduate students consistently included attention to instructor attitudes, dispositions, and relationships as highly influential in their classroom experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Key Influences on Perceptions of Educator Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Hill (2014)            | Graduate students in adult and higher education | Qualitative analysis of 8 years of course-based data | • knowledge of content and teaching,  
• relationships with students (having the best interests of students at heart), and  
• teachers’ attitudes with respect to teaching and learning (p. 60) |
| Fuhrman, Fuhrman, & DeLay (2010) | Doctoral students in diverse disciplines | Phenomenological analysis of interviews | • exhibits passion which motivates learners,  
• knows and cares about learners,  
• applies diverse teaching strategies, and  
• demonstrates the relevance and applicability of content (p. 19) |
| Pietrzak, Duncan, & Korcuska (2008) | Counselor education students | Conjoint analysis regarding decision-making process for SET | • Instructor knowledge (40%)  
• Instructor delivery style (30%)  
• Instructor organization (17%)  
• Course workload (13%) |
| Kreider (2009)         | Counselor education students         | Q-Methodology study with focus on generational preference | One consensus factor related to environment for personal and professional growth with attention to emotional safety, experiential learning, facilitation of deep learning, and organization and feedback |
Multimodal Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness

A one-size-fits-all approach to assessment of teaching effectiveness may be difficult given lack of consensus regarding what constitutes effective teaching, wide variation in instructor preparation, considerable instructor and discipline-specific variation in instructional methods, and differing philosophies about teaching. Still, there is a body of literature with remarkable consistency regarding tools for assessing teaching effectiveness. The scholarly literature includes extensive attention to SET, and there is widespread agreement that evaluation of teaching effectiveness must go beyond singular attention to student ratings (Benton & Cashin, 2012; Hoyt & Pallett, 1999). Benton and Ryalls (2016) recommended use of multiple measures of teaching effectiveness including consideration of SET, peer review, external recognition of teaching, direct evidence of student learning, engagement in professional development regarding teaching, and contributions to the department (e.g., teaching load, curriculum development, support of colleagues).

Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET)

SET are likely the most common and controversial of all assessment methods. Because the literature regarding SET is so vast, this brief will include attention to three systematic reviews and analyses regarding these tools. There are a number of common, “flagrantly false claims” (Benton & Ryalls, 2016, p. 2) and often-discussed misperceptions about student ratings that are not supported by research (Benton & Cashin, 2012). For example, faculty members may be concerned that SET are popularity contests, lack validity and reliability, are unfairly connected to rigor and fair grading, and are biased on basis of personal and demographic characteristics. Systematic research, however, shows that SET are remarkably stable over time (Benton & Cashin, 2012). In support of validity, “student ratings are significantly and consistently related to student achievement, teacher self-ratings, administrator and colleague ratings, ratings by trained observers, and student written comments” (Benton & Cashin, 2012, p. 5). Contrary to common discussion, high-performing students are more likely to complete evaluations, thus negating concerns that evaluations are unfairly biased toward low-performing or angry students.
(Benton & Ryalls, 2016). Despite some instructors’ concerns that students are becoming increasingly harsh, students seem to be assigning more favorable SET scores than in the past, especially as instructors adopt active and collaborative learning strategies (Benton & Ryalls, 2016).

Spooren et al. (2013) examined 160 peer-reviewed publications regarding SET and provided a synthesis of data regarding the following validity considerations: sampling and item, face, structural, convergent, discriminant and divergent, substantive, outcome, and criterion-related. This review indicated that SET instruments varied widely in their focus and connection to effective teaching; however, there were some effective instruments. At the same time, disconnects between administrator, instructor, and student priorities may result in use of assessment instruments that do not reflect all stakeholders’ concerns. The existence of small to strong, positive connections between SET and objective measures of student learning provides support for the instruments as well as motivation to go beyond SET to more accurately capture the whole of teaching effectiveness. Concerns regarding bias are complicated (see Benton & Cashin, 2012; Benton & Ryalls, 2016; Spooren et al., 2013); however, student bias does not appear to be nearly as influential as many believe. Finally, strong SET tools are created with careful attention to formulation of questions and include both closed/ended or rating questions and open-ended questions for formative feedback; the IDEA Center (listed in resource section) offers some excellent tools for faculty members.

Many universities are migrating to online data collection systems rather than using more traditional, time-intensive paper-and-pencil evaluations. This change has raised questions regarding validity of these tools and this data-collection format. Although there are well-documented decreases in response rates for online collection tools (Benton & Cashin, 2012; Spooren et al., 2013), research does not support concerns that there are meaningful differences in online and paper surveys. Still, the literature includes a number of recommendations for increasing student participation in online surveys.

Despite a strong body of evidence to support SET as one valuable measure of teaching effectiveness, use of SET is not without complications. Empirical evidence indicates that SET are often unused, misused, or underused. Course evaluations are focused on courses; faculty members and administrators need to examine a pattern of SET ratings, ideally evaluations from 6-8 courses over several years, to formulate meaningful interpretations regarding an instructor’s effectiveness (Benton & Ryalls, 2016). Using experimental design, Boysen (2015) found widespread misinterpretation of meaning of mean differences on teaching evaluations, with faculty members often neglecting to consider confidence intervals and statistical tests even when that information is provided. Similarly, faculty members asked to evaluate others’ teaching effectiveness over-interpreted mean differences even when those differences were not statistically significantly different.

Finally, examination of multiple studies shows that provision of SET ratings alone does not necessarily improve instruction (Benton & Cashin, 2012; Spooren et al., 2013). Rather, engagement in consultation and self-reflection regarding SET feedback is critical to improving teaching (Ryan, 2015). Meta-analysis of 11 studies in which faculty members engaged in consultative feedback regarding SET indicated that this process can be helpful for improving teaching (Penny & Coe, 2004). Similarly, Winchester and Winchester (2014) provided evidence that faculty members in diverse fields who reflected on their teaching improved SET
scores, with the greatest increases for those who engaged in the highest levels of reflection. Faculty members who were recognized for excellent teaching were intentional in their use of SET, highlighting the importance of a reflective approach, attitude toward continual improvement, and view of SET data as formative feedback regarding how well students were learning in their courses (Golding & Adam, 2016). Finally, Hedges and Webber (2014) provided guidelines for considering how to use evaluation feedback to identify department-level strengths and areas for growth.

In contrast to the proliferation of literature regarding the use of SET in assessment of teaching effectiveness, there is limited information regarding use of peer observation of teaching (POT) or direct evidence of student learning for assessing teaching effectiveness. Further, most literature is conceptual and practical in nature, providing suggestions for practice but not including evidence of effectiveness.

**Peer Observation of Teaching (POT)**

There is a relatively thin body of research and best practice literature as it relates to POT. In all, the literature seems to suggest that POT can be a meaningful experience for observer and observed alike; however, there is wide variation in compliance and integration of POT as part of the faculty evaluation process (Carroll & Loughlin, 2014; Chamberlain, Artrey, & Rowe, 2011; Divall et al., 2012; Kohut, Burnap, & Yon, 2007; Thampy, Bourke, & Naran, 2015). In one study, observers noted they found pre- and post-observation meetings useful and were comfortable making constructive and critical comments; observed faculty members believed the class(es) observed were representative of their teaching and feedback was valuable and useful (Kohut et al., 2007). In another study regarding a four-stage POT program within pharmacy education, Divall et al. (2012) found that faculty members received positive and constructive feedback, became more aware of strengths, and identified concrete opportunities for improvement through the protocol, thus noting usefulness of this format for improving teaching. Finally, new faculty members reported enjoying effective peer relationships and choice in peer observers and learning from both being observed and observing others (Carroll & Loughlin, 2014).

Use of POT may be hindered by several logistical concerns. Faculty members tend to indicate they are not formally or appropriately prepared to conduct POT (Chamberlain et al., 2011; Kohut et al., 2007) with only one-fifth to one-third of faculty members noting they were adequately prepared to conduct POT, an issue that threatens the validity of the POT process (Benton & Ryalls, 2016). Even when guidelines are provided, faculty members may not comply with them (Kohurt et al., 2007). In one study, less than one-half of faculty members had been observed using university guidelines and protocols in the last year (Chamberlain et al., 2011). Divall et al. (2012) noted very positive faculty experiences with a four stage model; however, many faculty members did not complete the last stage of the model, reviewing direct evidence of student learning with peer observers. Although faculty members in Chamberlain et al.’s (2011) study saw potential in the POT process, participants noted ambiguity regarding the purpose of POT, lack of supporting structures, and disconnection between POT and formal processes, suggesting need for greater development and integration of POT in the assessment of teaching effectiveness.
Additional Indicators of Teaching Effectiveness

As noted previously, recommendations for assessment of teaching effectiveness consistently go beyond SET and POT as indicators of achievement. In particular, scholars often recommend reflection on one’s own teaching effectiveness, evidence of direct student learning, recognition by others, and contributions to the curriculum as a whole (Benton & Ryalls, 2016). Unfortunately, literature-based recommendations and research findings regarding these indicators are extremely limited. The following section includes a summary of applications related to evaluation of teaching effectiveness.

3. Application

A web search will likely result in a plethora of practical tools and recommendations for engaging in evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Likewise, several scholars have provided tools and processes that counselor educators may find helpful for evaluating teaching effectiveness. In some cases, this section will include summaries of key points and recommendations. In others, we will recommend readers consult original resources for detailed support. Categories addressed include SET, POT, self-assessment and reflective practice, and assessment of student learning.

Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET)

Because so many SET practices are grounded at the university and college levels, counselor educators are unlikely to have direct choice in SET instrumentation. Still, counselor educators can use the following tools to understand the context, strengths, and limitations of the SET tool(s) in place by administration; consider developing supplemental resources (e.g., open-ended questionnaires) if the SET does not allow for open-ended, formative feedback; and ensure appropriate use of SET in self-reflection and evaluation activities.

Benton and Ryalls (2016) provided a list of best practices for use of SET we believe readers may find helpful for framing the process. Although designed for administrators, faculty members may also benefit from considering the following recommendations regarding evaluation of teaching effectiveness:

- Use multiple measures including, but not limited to, a series of SET for a variety of courses
- Recognize the limitations of each measure
- Weight measures according to reliability and validity
- Control for influence of non-instructional variables such as course difficulty, size, and context
- Provide comparative data for courses and instructors
- Include global items
- Vary evaluation schedules
- Use written comments only formatively
- Employ standardized administrative procedures
- Protect student confidentiality
• Encourage good response rates on SET through use of class time to complete measures, implementation of small incentives, and practical discussion of how one uses results to improve teaching
• Educate administrators and faculty regarding appropriate use and interpretation of SET

Malouff, Reid, Wilkes, and Emmerton (2015) provided a 14-step process for faculty member use of SET to evaluate teaching in psychology. The process includes reflection of teaching goals, reflection regarding self-ratings in the course, comparison to previous ratings, comparison to others’ ratings in similar courses, variation in items that were higher and lower than others, themes in positive and critical student comments, student suggestions for change, pleasant surprises, evaluation of whether course goals were met, consultation with peers, and overall conclusions. Counselor educators may find this resource particularly helpful for guiding holistic use of SET feedback.

Research strongly supports the use of consultative feedback regarding SET for facilitating growth. Penny and Coe (2004) utilized a meta-analysis of 11 studies regarding impact of consultative feedback regarding SET on subsequent SET and derived the following eight strategies faculty members should utilize in the feedback process:

1. Active involvement of teachers in the learning process;
2. Use of multiple sources of information;
3. Interaction with peers;
4. Sufficient time for dialogue and interaction;
5. Use of teacher self-ratings;
6. Use of high-quality feedback information;
7. Examination of conception of teaching; and
8. Setting of improvement goals (p. 245)

Peer Observation of Teaching (POT)

As noted above, POT is considered a key strategy in a multimodal approach to teaching effectiveness, and the literature includes some consistent recommendations regarding use of POT. Key considerations for quality processes include appropriate preparation of peer observers, pre-review consultation, observation, post-review consultation, and integration of student feedback and learning products into the process.

Siddiqui, Jonas-Dwyer, and Carr (2007, p. 298) outlined twelve concrete tips of POT among medical faculty. These included:

1. Choose the observer carefully
2. Set aside time for the peer observation
3. Clarify expectations
4. Familiarize yourself with the course
5. Select the instrument wisely
6. Include students
7. Be objective
8. Resist the urge to compare with your own teaching style
9. Do not intervene
10. Follow the general principles of feedback
11. Maintain confidentiality
12. Make it a learning experience

Counselor educators who wish to implement POT in evaluation of teaching effectiveness may also look to the literature for accounts of development processes, overall strategies, and reflections on the process. The following resources are particularly helpful:

- Trujillo et al. (2009) developed a piloted a POT program and observation/evaluation tool for use in pharmacy education. The authors provided an outline for the program development process from vision through documentation, the evaluation tool, and the procedures. The article includes an overview of four distinct stages: 1) pre-observation meeting, 2) classroom observation, 3) post-observation meeting, and 4) post-assessment meeting following student learning outcome results.
- Drew and Klopper (2014) described an innovative model, PRO-Teaching, a peer observation conducted at multiple points in time and including attention to student feedback and debriefing with faculty members in a way that benefited individual instructors and units as a whole.
- Bell and Cooper (2016) developed and implemented a POT program in an engineering school including preparation workshops, trial observation sessions, resources provided, observation stages, and use of observation data.
- Many institutions also offer handbooks or guides for peer observation. The following handbooks are particularly well-developed:

**Self-Assessment & Reflective Practice**

Given the degree of reflection inherent in the counseling profession, counselor educators are likely already involved in self-assessment and reflection regarding their teaching. Still, counselor educators may benefit from structuring this process and involving others in its development. In some cases, faculty members may be required or choose to develop a teaching portfolio as a way of showcasing their development as faculty members. The following two resources are helpful for reflective practice.

- Richmond et al. (2014) outlined the *Society for the Teaching of Psychology* criteria for model undergraduate psychology instructors. These criteria provide aspirational criteria
related to six areas (i.e., training, instructional methods, assessment process, syllabi, content, and student evaluations of teaching) and provide a framework for self-assessment purposes. By attending to considerations that are specific and focused, instructors may find themselves better able to target strengths and opportunities for development.

- Golding and Adam (2016) outlined a series of questions master teachers often asked as they engaged in complex decision-making processes regarding how they might use SET and other teaching feedback to improve student learning outcomes. The questions were as follows:
  
  *To what extent have my students learned? What has benefitted or blocked their learning?*
  *To what extent have I fostered their learning? How can I improve learning outcomes for students? How can I provide a better learning experience? How can I improve my teaching? How can I use evaluation feedback to help me answer these questions? What further feedback do I need?* (p. 11)

**Assessment of Student Learning**

Although there is limited research regarding how faculty members might use direct evidence of student learning in assessment of teaching effectiveness, there is agreement that this area deserves attention. Counselor educators may find Section Eight: Student Support and Remediation, helpful for considering the range of evidence of student learning outcomes in counselor education. In particular, counselor educators may consider the following potential indicators of student learning and, by extension and indicator of teaching effectiveness:

- Learning products generated
- Performance on course assignments and examinations
- Performance in field experiences related to coursework (e.g., group counseling, career counseling)
- Performance in later, related courses
- Performance on relevant areas of standardized examinations study as CPCE, NCE, and state school counseling certification examinations
- Presentations and publications resulting from coursework, especially in doctoral programs
- Student recognitions or awards related to items developed in courses

As with all other indicators of teaching effectiveness, counselor educators must consider findings in context of student characteristics, program design, and other complex factors.

**4. Considerations for Diverse Learners and Multicultural Implications**

Counselor educators are responsible for integrating attention to diversity across all courses and topics taught (ACA, 2014; CACREP 2016). It is only natural, that evaluation of teaching effectiveness include attention to multicultural considerations. SET should include opportunity for students to rate and/or comment on instructor attention to diversity in course topics and respect for diverse learners. Similarly, faculty members engaged in POT should ensure the observation includes discussion regarding multicultural considerations in both course/lesson content and in the instructor’s delivery of the course. Consistent with recommendations for multiculturally competent counselors, counselor educators should also regularly reflect upon
themselves as cultural beings, their students as cultural beings, and the ways in which culture enters the classroom. This may include reflection regarding trends in students who perform well and/or struggle in the course and responsiveness to and inclusion of diverse perspectives within the course.

Historically, the literature has included a great deal of attention to the potential for racial and gender bias in SET. By and large, however, the literature does not support these concerns to the degree represented in popular culture dialogue (see Benton & Cashin, 2012; Benton & Ryalls, 2016; Spooren, 2013). In short, strongest results were from artificial laboratory studies, gender is weakly related to SET in some studies and not in others, and there are few studies of race/ethnicity with conflicting results. In short:

To say that teacher gender, race, and personality do not exert great influence on SRI [student ratings of instruction] is not to deny that bias does exist for some students in a class. Of course bias exists to some degree in student feedback, as course ratings are surveys designed and filled out by humans. But, bias in student ratings due to these instructor variables is not large and should not greatly affect teaching evaluations. Moreover, faculty need to understand and be comfortable that SRI are robust against other potential biases. For example, SRI are not strongly related to instructor age and teaching experience (Marsh & Hocevar, 1991). They are also robust against potential biases brought on by some student characteristics. Student gender is not highly correlated with ratings, although student-gender-by-instructor-gender interactions have been reported. (Benton & Ryalls, 2016, p. 4)

5. Ethical Implications

If counselor educators are responsible for preparing effective counselors, teaching effectiveness becomes an ethical mandate. Consistent with the ACA Code of Ethics (2014, Section F.7), counselor educators must consistently evaluate their bounds of competence to ensure they are providing the most effective, appropriate instruction possible. In addition, faculty members are to ensure appropriate representation of evaluation of teaching effectiveness. When faculty members become aware of ineffective teaching methods and feedback, they should take care to remedy concerns just as we expect students and professional counselors to remedy concerns that impede their effectiveness.

6. Unanswered Questions / Future Directions

Much of the literature regarding assessment of teaching effectiveness is general in nature, situated in broad-based undergraduate education. Although there are some resources to suggest characteristics and qualities of effective graduate instructors and effective counselor educators, it is unknown whether characteristics of effective counselor educators are similar to or different from characteristics of effective educators in other fields. Areas for future exploration will include attending to:

- degree to which SET can capture unique demands of counselor education classrooms,
- role of POT in assessing counselor education effectiveness,
- connection of SET and POT with student success in fieldwork, and
- counselor educators’ use of feedback to improve teaching over time.
7. Resources

In addition to resources noted above, counselor educators may find the following resources helpful:

- Cornell University Center for Teaching Excellence [www.cte.cornell.edu](http://www.cte.cornell.edu)
- IDEA Papers: [http://www.ideaedu.org](http://www.ideaedu.org)
- Michigan State University Office of Faculty & Organizational Development Evaluating Teaching Effectiveness [http://fod.msu.edu/oir/evaluating-teaching-effectiveness](http://fod.msu.edu/oir/evaluating-teaching-effectiveness)
- University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching Guidelines for Evaluating Teaching [http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/guidelines](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/guidelines)

8. References


1. Overview of Topic and Relationship to Counselor Education

Counselor education faculty are responsible for supporting development of the most ethical and effective professional counselors possible. Counselor educators must ensure students develop both ability (skills) and willingness (dispositions) to uphold core professional values in keeping with fundamental ethical principles: autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, justice, fidelity, and veracity (see American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014). The ACA Code of Ethics (2014) and Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) 2016 Standards include clear charges for upholding core professional and ethical values. This brief includes attention to ethical and accreditation standards related to problems of professional competence (PPC) and outlines literature-based guidelines for engaging in remediation and gatekeeping processes that promote students’ professional competence, preserve students’ educational rights, and ultimately protect client dignity and welfare. The brief will include attention to general processes and specific implications for counselor educators who become aware of PPC within counselor education courses.

The following definitions will be utilized throughout this brief:

- **Problems of professional competence (PPC)** refer to knowledge, skill, or disposition deficits that may impact provision of ethical and effective counseling services to clients (see Elman & Forrest, 2007).
- **Gatekeeping** refers to “the ethical responsibility of counselor educators and supervisors to monitor and evaluate an individual’s knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions required by competent professional counselors and to remediate or prevent those that are lacking in professional competence from becoming counselors” (CACREP, 2016, p. 41).
- **Professional dispositions** refer to “the commitments, characteristics, values, beliefs, interpersonal functioning, and behaviors that influence the counselor’s professional growth and interactions with clients and colleagues” (CACREP, 2016, p. 43).
- **Remediation** refers to activities designed to address PPC.

2. Relevant Research and Literature Support

There is a substantial body of research literature indicating that PPC routinely manifest in counselor education programs. Estimates regarding the portion of students who demonstrate PPC in counselor education programs vary widely based on methodology and informants (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2013; Foster, Leppma, & Hutchinson, 2014). Students estimated rates of PPC among peers to be more than twice rates estimated by faculty members; they estimated the portion of gateslipped (i.e., students with PPC who avoided detection from gatekeeping faculty members) peers to be six times greater than faculty estimates (Gaubatz & Vera, 2006). Nearly three-quarters of a large sample of preservice master’s students in
CACREP-accredited programs reported observing classmates with PPC, and one-half of students reported being impacted by peers’ PPC (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2013). CACREP 2016 Standards imply three general types of PPC in the requirement that faculty attend to students’ knowledge (academic), skills (clinical), and professional dispositions throughout their programs. Upon conducting a comprehensive content analysis regarding PPC and remediation, Henderson and Dufrene (2012) identified the following PPC themes: ethical behaviors, symptoms of a mental health diagnosis, intrinsic characteristics, counseling skills, feedback, self-reflective abilities, personal difficulties, and procedural compliance.

Research regarding PPC experienced in counselor education programs aligns well with literature-derived themes. A large sample of counselor educators reported the following five concerns as most prevalent in their programs: receptivity to feedback, basic counseling skills, boundaries, openness to self-examination, and advanced counseling skills (Henderson & Dufrene, 2013). Similarly, peers rated the following PPC as most prevalent in their programs: emotion regulation, ethical behaviors, psychological unsuitability, and unprofessional behavior (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2013).

The ACA Code of Ethics (2014) and CACREP 2016 Standards provide clear charges and general procedural considerations for assessing and supporting student progress throughout their programs, including expectations for remediation of PPC. For example, related standards require:

- Provision of student orientations including attention to ethical and professional obligations (CACREP, 2016, I.M)
- Provision of student handbook including information regarding expectations for students; appeal policies; and policies for student retention, remediation, and dismissal from the program (ACA, 2014, F.8.a; CACREP, 2016, I.N)
- Requirements to have and follow policies for retention, remediation, and dismissal (ACA, 2014, F.9.b; CACREP, 2016, I.O)
- Provision of formative and summative evaluations throughout field experiences (ACA, 2014, F.6.a; CACREP, 2016, 3.C)
- Engagement in systematic processes allowing identification of student progress in knowledge and skills throughout the program (CACREP, 2016, 4.F) and articulating these expectations to students (ACA, 2014, F.9.a)
- Engagement in systematic processes allowing identification of student progress in professional dispositions (CACREP, 2016, 4.G) and articulating these expectations to students (ACA, 2014, F.9.a)
- Use of systematic assessment data for retention, remediation, and dismissal (CACREP, 2016, 4.H)
- Explicit permission to require students to address personal concerns that may affect professional competency (ACA, 2014, F.8.D)
- Explicit permission to require students to engage in personal counseling related to PPC, provided counselor educators help students find appropriate providers (ACA, 2014, F.9.c)

As is illustrated in these standards, attention to effective counselor development, student support, remediation, and gatekeeping begins prior to admissions (Rust et al., 2013; Swank &
Smith-Adcock, 2014) and continues until a student’s time in the program ends through graduation, withdrawal, or dismissal (Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). Similarly, scholars are united in recommendations for formal, transparent, written policies and procedures that are implemented before students’ matriculation into a program (Foster et al., 2014; Rust et al., 2013). From a legal prospective, such policies and procedures will also assist programs in demonstrating procedural due process when faculty engage in remediation and gatekeeping activities (Dugger & Francis, 2014; McAdams & Foster, 2007).

Standards and scholars alike stress the need for clearly articulated expectations for academic performance, clinical skills, and professional dispositions to be used in throughout the counselor education program (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016; Duba, Paez, & Kindsvatter, 2010; Homrich, DeLorenzi, Bloom, & Godbee, 2014; Rust et al., 2013). Homrich and colleagues provided evidence of convergence of opinion in a Q methodology study regarding counselor educators’ opinions for specific, behavioral standards of conduct in clinical training. Although aspirational, Rust and colleagues (2013) reminded educators that many elements of professional competency are difficult to define and operationalize. In many cases, PPC focus on dispositional qualities rather than more discrete knowledge and skills (Barrio Minton, Gibson, & Wachter Morris, 2016). Thus, operationalization of dispositions is an important element of the development process.

Unfortunately, evidence indicates that remediation processes and criteria for evaluation are rarely clear. Crawford and Gilroy (2012) found that master’s-level programs often engaged in remediation; however, faculty members reported feeling hindered by lack of formal guidelines and inconsistent implementation of process. Research with counseling students indicated that less than one-half of counseling students were aware of their programs’ procedures to address PPC (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2013). Similarly, counseling students desired clear communication of policy and concrete parameters or expectations for behavior, even if students themselves could not articulate examples of such behaviors (Foster et al., 2014). Finally, students who reported peers with PPC expressed not knowing appropriate procedures for communicating concerns with faculty and being generally unaware of program policies regarding PPC and remediation (Parker et al., 2014).

In all, students need expectations and procedures articulated at multiple times and via multiple methods throughout their training programs (Foster & McAdams, 2009; Pease-Carter & Barrio Minton, 2012; Foster et al., 2014; Rust et al., 2013). Variation of communication methods may include written policy and oral discussion (Pease-Carter & Barrio Minton, 2012), and these conversations may happen at various points in the program including prior to admission, orientation, in advising, and prior to classes or field experiences in which they are relevant (Foster et al., 2014; Pease-Carter & Barrio Minton, 2012; Rust et al., 2013).

The literature includes a number of findings regarding remediation options related to PPC. Most simply, faculty members who identify PPC have a responsibility to identify corrective, non-punitive interventions that reasonably support students’ potential for success in the program, a legal concept known as substantive due process (McAdams & Foster, 2007). Counselor educators report using a wide range of interventions ranging from additional
coursework and supervision to personal counseling to leave of absence (Crawford & Gilroy, 2012; Rust et al., 2013). Following a careful review of the remediation research, Henderson and Dufrene (2011) identified the following literature-based interventions related to PPC:

- Personal counseling
- Increased faculty contact
- Increased supervision
- Repetition of academic or clinical coursework
- Removal from clinical work
- Additional assignments
- Additional coursework
- Leave of absence
- Workshops or continuing education

In short, counselor educators who become aware that students lack key or foundation knowledge in their coursework may collaborate with students to design meaningful learning activities that may include completion of additional reading, writing, or practice assignments; participation in outside continuing education coursework; or other engagement designed to address the concern in the immediate term. Counselor educators who notice student dispositions that may impede ability to meet needs of clients may focus interventions on personal counseling or other relationally-based methods for facilitating change. Notably, counselor educators perceive remediation as effective. Counselor educators reported that although nearly one in five trainees refused remediation, nearly three-quarters of students who engaged in remediation were successful in their efforts (Crawford & Gilroy, 2012).

As will be discussed in the following section, existing literature also provides some concrete guidelines helpful in the process of articulating expectations on which evaluation of PPC will be based, developing policies and procedures related to PPC, and developing and implementing plans for students who demonstrate PPC. Although the literature contains very few references to PPC and remediation within didactic or pre-service counselor education classes, the application section will include attention to remediation of PPC in the counselor education classroom. Resources for further study will be highlighted.

3. Application

A. Competency Expectations

Programs and counselor education faculty members who have articulated expectations, adopted learning assessments, and identified programmatic gateways for assessing student performance will be well on their way to implementing quality student remediation and support procedures. Careful articulation of student learning outcomes (SLOs), dispositional expectations, and related assessment procedures will help counselor education program faculty articulate expectations as outlined in CACPEP 2016 Standards and ACA Code of Ethics (2014) (see Section Seven: Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness). Alignment of SLOs with assessment activities will provide students with clear understanding of expectations while providing counselor educators with specific points at which they can assess students’ professional performance and engagement within the counselor education
classroom. Further, aligning expectations with assessment activities provides students with ongoing, developmentally-oriented feedback regarding their professional growth even before field experience.

Counselor education faculty members may also find the following sources helpful for framing competency expectations:

- Professional association competency documents (e.g., Association for Multicultural Counseling & Development *Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies*; Association for Specialists in Group Work *Best Practice Guidelines*; Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious, Values in Counseling *Spiritual Competencies*, National Career Development Association *Career Counseling Competencies*; Association for Counselor Education and Supervision *Supervision Best Practices*)
- Homrich et al.’s (2014) proposed standards of conduct
- Literature articulating experiences of PPCs in counselor education programs (e.g., Henderson & Dufrene, 2012)

Similarly, counselor education programs and faculty members should clearly articulate and operationalize expected professional dispositions expected throughout all program activities, including preservice coursework (CACREP, 2016). Such dispositions may be derived from the professional literature.

- Barrio Minton et al. (2016) described concrete considerations for identifying dispositions within counselor education programs.
- Brown (2013) reviewed tools used to assess problematic behaviors, including a number of dispositional assessment tools.
- Spurgeon, Gibbons, and Cochran (2012) described the process of creating professional dispositions for use in a counselor education program, thus outlining a model process for others to emulate.
- Duba et al. (2010) interviewed counselor educators in attempts to identify criteria for nonacademic characteristics used to evaluate and retain community counseling students.

Because field experience is the most authentic assessment of professional counseling competency, it can be tempting to focus most expectations on clinical service or experience. When developing competency expectations, counselor educators should also pay careful attention to ways in which PPC may begin to manifest in early coursework and interactions with faculty. Competency expectations may include attention to academic performance, early classroom-based skill expectations, and dispositions that may manifest in early classroom experiences (e.g., openness to experience, respect for peers and instructor, etc.). In addition, counselor educators can ensure clear attention to expectations at the course level by creating clear and comprehensive syllabi that include attention to academic skills, knowledge, and dispositions expected for the course and program (See Section Ten: Program Structure and Curriculum Sequencing).
B. Policies and Procedures

It is imperative that counselor education programs develop policies and procedures regarding PPC and demonstrate careful compliance with policies when responding to PPC. Such compliance is consistent with accreditation (CACPEP, 2016) and ethical (ACA, 2014) standards and, in case of legal or administrative action, allows faculty members to demonstrate engagement in procedural due process (Dugger & Francis, 2014; McAdams & Foster, 2007).

Review, retention, and remediation procedures should be developed at the program-level and consistent with institutional policy. Once procedures and expectations are developed, programs should review proposed procedures with administrators at the department, college, and university levels to ensure understanding and buy-in. In addition, it would be wise to bring the proposed procedures and expectations to university legal counsel for review. Doing so will help ensure the policy is in line with university procedures, complies with legal requirements, and has strong likelihood of being supported by administrators in the event that faculty members must activate the plan to address PPC.

Because each program has unique culture and context, it is not appropriate to expect that all policies and procedures will look alike (Barrio Minton et al., 2016). Faculty members may find the following questions helpful for developing or evaluating program-level policies and procedures:

- What academic skills, clinical skills, and professional dispositions are expected of students in the program?
- Where and how are academic, clinical, and professional disposition expectations communicated to program stakeholders including faculty members, site supervisors, and students?
- How, when, where, and by whom are academic skills, clinical skills, and professional dispositions assessed throughout the program?
- How can faculty members build in early opportunity to assess and address PPC in program and course sequencing?
- On what schedule and using what means will program faculty systematically review each students’ progress through the program?
- How will program faculty communicate results of systematic review with students?
- How will faculty members, site supervisors, or students who become aware of PPC outside of regular review procedures bring these concerns to the faculty for attention?
- When faculty members become aware of a PPC, what will be the process for communicating the concern to the student, developing the remediation plan, and carrying out the remediation plan?
  - Will communication happen orally, in writing, or both?
  - Who will be involved in discussing the concern with the student?
  - Who will be involved in identifying remediation activities?
  - Who will be involved in monitoring compliance with activities?
  - Who will be involved in determining progress?
  - How will the concern and plan be documented?
  - How will progress be documented?
How will faculty members ensure continuity and consistency in addressing PPC across courses and instructors?

How can faculty members best support students with PPC as they progress in coursework?

What types of remediation activities may be specified on a plan?

What is the appeal process?

What are students’ rights and responsibilities in the process? What are faculty members’ rights and responsibilities in the process?

C. Remediation

Whereas the previous section focused on articulating processes and policies related to remediation in general, this section focuses on the process of developing and implementing remediation plans for specific students.

The professional counseling literature includes several templates for remediation plans (e.g., Kress & Protivnak, 2009). As much as possible, students should be involved in problem identification and development of remediation strategies (Rust et al., 2013). As noted above, remediation plans must be developed in a spirit of corrective intent rather than punishment (McAdams & Foster, 2007), thus allowing students maximum opportunities for success. Because broaching PPC with students can be a difficult process, counselor educators can benefit from preparing carefully for conversations with students. Jacobs et al. (2011) provides an outstanding guide regarding broaching PPC conversations with students.

Regardless of format used, remediation plans should include the following elements (Henderson & Dufrene, 2011; Kress & Protivnak, 2009; Rust et al., 2013)

- Articulation of PPC in clear, specific, behavioral terms
- Connection of PPC to program expectations, professional counseling literature, education standards, and/or ethical codes
- Operationalization of expected outcomes in positive, growth-oriented terms
- Specification of process for remediation and support with a focus on what students, faculty, and other key stakeholders will do to ensure growth and monitor student progress (see Henderson & Dufrene, 2013 for sample interventions)
- Timeline for remediation behaviors and demonstration of change
- Operationalization of indicators or evidence needed to support change (e.g., verification of counseling attendance, scholarly products, timely attendance, appropriate participation in class discussion, demonstration of clinical skills)
- Specification of procedural considerations related to compliance, including responsible parties
- Signatures
- Notice of appeal procedures

When developing remediation plans, faculty members should consider the scope of the PPC and intervention. For early, mild problems, for example, it may be appropriate to handle the concern primarily at the course level. Certainly, expectations around additional academic work, appropriate participation in class activities, and development of basic counseling skills may be
well bounded within the scope of a course. At the same time, it is important for faculty members to communicate regarding experiences with students so they can attend to greater themes in experiences and work together to support student success and, when necessary, engage in gatekeeping.

4. Considerations for Diverse Learners and Multicultural Implications

Counselor educators are responsible for infusing attention to cultural considerations in all program and academic activities (ACA, 2014; CACREP 2016; Ziomek-Daigle & Bailey, 2009). There are two primary groups of cultural considerations related to remediation and student support. The first relates to the role of culture in assessment and experiences of PPC. The second relates to PPC regarding multicultural counseling competencies.

First, counselor educators are responsible for considering how issues of privilege, power, and culture may be at play in their expectations for student communication styles, engagement, and values and their resulting assessment of PPC (Goodrich & Shin, 2013). Counselor educators should also consider how culture impacts students’ experiences within the program, especially when non-dominant students may appear defensive or closed to feedback (Goodrich & Shin, 2013; Rust et al., 2013; Ziomek-Daigle & Bailey, 2009). As counselor educators identify potential PPC, they should do so with awareness to and respect of the role of students’ cultural experiences, beliefs, and values in the counselor preparation process. In addition, counselor education faculty members should pay careful attention to trends in PPC; such examination may illuminate opportunities to develop preventative, responsive systems and program activities that meet the needs of diverse students (Rust et al., 2013) and ensure fundamental fairness within the program (McAdams & Foster, 2007).

Cultural viewpoints, often centered on students’ religion freedom, have played a central role in recent dialogue regarding gatekeeping in the profession. In many cases, PPC may center around students’ dispositions including openness and respect for others’ cultural and religious perspectives. Ethical and accreditation standards, as well as widely accepted Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (Ratts, Singh, McMillan, Butler, McCullough, 2015), emphasize the need to ensure counselor education students have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to practice ethically and effectively with a wide range of clients. Counselor educators must balance this attention to professional obligations with students’ rights to maintain personal beliefs and values that do not impact their ability to provide professionally competent services (Dugger & Francis, 2014; Hutchens, Block, & Young, 2013; Kocet & Herlihy, 2014; Rust et al, 2013). Counselor educators who identify PPC that appear to be related to students’ personal, cultural beliefs may look to the professional literature for guidance on navigating this delicate balance.

5. Ethical Implications

As highlighted previously, counselor educators have an ultimate ethical responsibility for promoting client wellbeing and protecting against harm to clients. The remediation process is designed to support the positive development of students. When it is clear a candidate is not able
or willing to provide appropriate care, counselor educators must engage in gatekeeping to protect against the student’s entry into the profession.

As highlighted throughout this brief, counselor educators must balance this ultimate responsibility to clients with a responsibility to provide due process for students (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016; McAdams & Foster, 2007). Counselor educators who clearly articulate expectations, follow policy and procedures as written, and engage in remediation process with fair, corrective intent will best be able to support students while protecting clients.

6. Unanswered Questions / Future Directions

There is a respectable body of literature regarding PPC and remediation in professional counseling and related mental health professions. To date, this body of literature includes recommendations for action and some assessment of student and faculty members’ observations and behaviors related to PPC and remediation process. Several unanswered questions emerged in this process. In particular:

- To what degree is remediation effective in assisting students to resolve PPC? More specifically, what interventions are most appropriate for specific students and specific concerns (Rust et al., 2013)? Relatedly, which concerns are best addressed within the individual classroom, and which concerns benefit from broader program intervention?
- Although ACA (2014) supports requirements for students to engage in personal counseling, requirements for counseling as an intervention appears to be controversial. Future researchers may investigate when and how requirements to engage in personal counseling are appropriate for resolving PPC.
- To date, counselor educators have not identified predictors of success or PPC for counselor education students. Identification of predictors may play an important role in early gatekeeping (i.e., admissions) processes.
- How can counselor educators most effectively balance professional judgement with creation of clear standards of competence?
- Can and should the counseling profession develop a consensus definition of PPC and standardized expectations for conduct throughout the profession (Homrich et al., 2014; Rust et al., 2013)?
- Can and should the counseling profession develop a standardized process of remediation (Rust et al., 2013)?
- How can counselor educators best attend to culture in the PPC and remediation process?
- What is the role of students in the PPC and remediation processes? How can faculty members support peers in gatekeeping and remediation activities (Brown-Rice & Furr, 2013; Parker et al., 2014)?

7. Recommended Resources


8. References


Hutchens, N., Block, J., & Young, M. (2013). Counselor educators’ gatekeeping responsibilities
and students’ First Amendment rights. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 52*, 82–95. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6978.2013.00030.x


Section Nine
Teaching Excellence

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This section provides a brief overview of the concept of teaching excellence, perspectives on its relevance to counselor education, and what constitutes teaching excellence in action. A brief discussion of the professional responsibilities and ethics associated with teaching excellence and robust take away points are provided. Teaching resources with links to K-12 and higher education teaching excellence standards, faculty development websites, teaching journals, and references are included.

1. Overview of Topic and Relationship to Counselor Education

The term teaching excellence is linked to the scholarship of teaching (SOT; Boyer, 1990); a concept originally intended to elevate the credibility of teaching related to the tenure and promotion processes at research-intensive institutions (Herteis, 2002). Teachers operating from the SOT perspective conduct themselves with a high level of rigor and contribute to their disciplinary fields in ways that can be peer reviewed (Boyer, 1990; Kreber, 2002a, 2002b). The credibility of teaching is elevated by the acts of scholarly teachers, who practice in ways that advance teaching from mere acts of “transmitting knowledge” to the systematic and intentional acts of “transforming and extending knowledge” (Boyer, 1990, p. 24). However, some believe that scholarly teachers are not necessarily excellent teachers (Kreber, 2002b; Healey, 2000). In fact, transmitting knowledge in teaching implies what Bain (2004) describes as a reliance on the fixed personality traits of excellent teachers, by talking at, or merely lecturing students from an expert perspective, rather than viewing teaching as a collaborative process for fostering students’ learning. It is also important to note that many teachers demonstrating teaching excellence are not necessarily prolific publishers (Bain, 2004).

The word excellent when applied to teaching--by implication--suggests a higher level of quality and successful performance in teaching practice (Kreber, 2002b; italics added). It is tempting to attribute meaning to the concept of teaching excellence as it relates to a set of “objective” evaluation criteria. This is an approach reminiscent of an evidence-based perspective, which suggests that some approaches, components, or characteristics of teaching are better (i.e., more excellent) than others. While students’ learning is a central outcome of teaching learning process, there is no single greatest way to teach (Bain, 2004) or a universally-accepted definition of teaching excellence (Skelton, 2009a, 2009b). Bain (2004) alternatively suggests that teaching excellence involves an adaptive approach where teachers can apply “fundamental principles” rather than specific techniques, “recognizing when intervention is possible and necessary,” and acknowledging that even “excellent teachers makes mistakes” (p. 175).

Some believe that it is the person (i.e. person-as-teacher) that has the most impact on teaching excellence (Palmer, 1998). The notion that the person-as-professional (versus combinations of specific techniques) has the capacity for direct influence on professional outcomes is not new in
the field of counseling (Readers are referred to Duncan, Hubble, and Miller, [2010], and Wampold and Imel, [2015] for a more complete description of common factors and counseling outcomes). When considering teaching excellence, a common factor is the teacher; that is, teaching excellence emanates from authentic and credible teachers who are likely to have well-defined beliefs about teaching (Brookfield, 2006; Palme, 1998). This author concurs with these scholars and adds that it is the perceptions that teachers hold about excellent teaching that runs parallel with their practice (Kreber, 2002a; Lam & Kemper, 2007; italics added). In other words, excellent teaching practices are necessarily in sync with conceptions, or one’s beliefs, about teaching (Lam & Kemper, 2007), suggesting a direct correspondence between the awareness of teaching beliefs and the enactment of teaching practices. It would seem that from this point of view, putting teaching beliefs into practice serves as one possible basis for establishing teaching excellence over time.

2. Relevant Research and Literature Support

The importance of teaching in the field of counselor education has been noted (Hall & Hulse, 2010). Teaching is a ubiquitous practice occupying a great deal of counselor educators’ time (Davis, Heller Levitt, McGlothlin, & Hill, 2006). Many scholars acknowledging the importance of teaching have suggested that faculty members be adequately prepared for teaching roles in higher education settings, (Austin, 2002; Meacham, 2002; Silverman, 2003) and more specifically, within the field of counselor education (Baltronic, Jenci, & McGlothlin, 2016; Barrio Minton, Wacht Morris, & Yaites, 2014; Hall & Hulse, 2010; Hunt & Weber Gilmore, 2011; Malott, Hrindaya Hall, Sheely-Moore, Krell, & Cardaciotto, 2014; Orr, Hall, & Hulse-Killacky, 2008). Teaching excellence, like other competency-based practices in counselor education, requires a commitment from counselor educators to continuous professional improvement beyond teacher preparation in graduate programs or as new faculty members. McMillan (2007) suggests that perspectives on teaching excellence are formed in educational contexts and, once formed, are not easily amenable to change; which may suggest that the conscientious development and refinement of one’s teaching perspectives is a practice one needs to learn early in his or her graduate training.

3. Application

From where does teaching excellence originate? How does teaching excellence look in action? Kreber (2002a) suggests that teaching excellence is enacted through a combination of active experimentation, personal experience, and reflection as opposed to formal sources such as the literature, research, and so forth. Hammer et al., (2010) identify a host of variables that influence teaching excellence including “who is defining it, the learners, subject matter, methods used, and many other factors” (p. 2). From this perspective, multiple variables intersect and inform excellent teaching practice, such as: (a) combinations of individual (teacher) and contextual (school, classroom, community) factors, (b) the relationships between teachers and students, (c) the interactions among teachers, peers, and students, and (d) the influence of teachers’ beliefs on what they believe to be quality teaching practice.
Other scholars view teaching excellence as a combination of a teacher’s authenticity, credibility, and commitment to quality (Brookfield, 1987, 2006; Kreber, 2002a, 2002b; Palmer, 1998). Brookfield (1987, 2006) stresses the importance of authenticity as a preferred characteristic of excellent teachers. From an authenticity perspective, teaching excellence emanates from real, in-the-flesh human beings who do not hide behind their jargon, degrees, or learned professional behaviors (Brookfield, 2006). Palmer’s (1998) views parallel Brookfield’s suggesting that excellent teachers teach who they are, emphasizing the importance of the person-as-the-teacher over teaching techniques as being most effective with students in the classroom. As a result, teachers who model authenticity are perceived as caring, approachable, and genuinely concerned about students’ learning, which leads to emotionally satisfying learning experiences for students and teachers (Brookfield 2006; Palmer, 1998). Some scholars suggest that students will associate emotionally satisfying experiences in the classroom with their perceived experiences of quality teaching (Moore & Kuol, 2007; Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002).

As mentioned before, teaching is an important role for counselor educators within counselor education that occupies a great deal of counselor educators’ time. It follows that the pursuit of teaching excellence can help counselor educators better use this ample time to prepare new counselors, supervisors, and counselor educators, and in so doing learn from the process. Essentially, the literature suggests that pursuing teaching excellence requires teachers to engage in a combination of reflective, recursive, and responsive processes; guided by students’ learning needs. To that end, five take home points are offered to readers interested in initiating and/or continuing the path to teaching excellence. Following those five points, refletion questions are offered in the interest of inspiring counselor educators’ teaching performance and pursuit of scholarship.

- **Teaching excellence can be learned.** The first take away point is that teaching excellence is “not innate,” rather it something that “can be learned” (Kane et al, 2004, p. 283). It is not a function of fixed personality characteristics or good teacher pedigree (Bain, 2004). And, according to these authors, the process of learning teaching excellence is dependent on the continuous act of purposeful reflective practice related to one’s teaching that will facilitate the development of this learned (and eventually excellent) teaching practice.

- **Teaching excellence involves authenticity not simply technique.** Second, teaching excellence emanates from the person-as-teacher (Palmer, 1998), or personal characteristics (McDonald Grieve, 2010), and not through a body of techniques, strategies, or gimmicks (Bain, 2004). That is not to say that strategies and interventions are not important. But, teaching interventions ought to be selected in the interest of impacting students’ learning experiences, and not solely for the sake of demonstrating technique. Furthermore, teachers in the pursuit of excellence are more likely to innovate by trying new things or take risks to meet their students’ needs (McDonald Grieve, 2010).

- **Teaching excellence develops by learning from mistakes.** Third, teaching excellence develops from teachers who do many things well, but that does not mean that they “don’t ever come up short, or that they don’t struggle to achieve good
teaching” (Bain, 2004, p. 19). This author also noted there are no cookbook or short cut to achieving teaching excellence, and that generating a simple list of “do’s and don’ts when describing teaching excellence fails to account for the “careful and sophisticated thinking, deep professional learning, and often fundamental shifts” (p. 15), qualities required for purposeful reflective teaching practice (Kane et al, 2004). Additionally, using peer reviewers for feedback on teaching, consulting with experienced mentors or teaching supervisors, and obtaining student feedback provides teachers with multiple sources of feedback, and helps them learn from their mistakes.

- **Teaching excellence develops from purposeful reflective practice.** Fourth, beginning with an assessment of one’s beliefs about teaching, purposeful reflection about one’s teaching can extend to other areas of teaching development, and can occur in conjunction with other types of feedback about teaching such as peer reviews of teaching and student evaluations. For example, Kane et al (2004) suggested a multidimensional model—derived from their study of excellent teachers in higher education settings—to independently guide one’s purposeful reflection about teaching. This model provides teachers with five dimensions to guide their reflective practice: subject knowledge, teaching skills, personality, research, and interpersonal relationships (shown in figure 1 below).

Some questions to guide the reflective process using the model include:
- What are my dimensions of greatest strength?
- What are my dimensions of needed growth?
- How will I evaluate and document my progress along the five dimensions?
- Who can help me with reviewing my dimensions of teaching development?

Figure 1 Dimensions of Reflective Teaching Practice
Overall, this model is one example that can be used to provide teachers with (criteria to consistently evaluate their teaching practice from year to year, which can be helpful for documenting and managing information used in tenure and promotion portfolios.

The concept of teaching excellence is present in the international literature, and is linked to social and technological changes in education (Skelton, 2009a, 2009b), performance evaluation of teaching (Skelton, 2009b), and the development of teaching incentives and awards (Kreber, 2002a; Skelton, 2009a). Moreover, information on teaching excellence in the North American higher education literature is often published in book form, with few conceptual pieces appearing in journals, and fewer empirical studies examining the relationship of quality teaching and student outcomes (Kember, 1997, 2009). Within and across higher education settings in the U.S. and abroad, teaching excellence appears directly linked to faculty development of teaching endeavors across numerous disciplines. And while faculty development information contained on university websites are helpful, they do very little to advance our understanding of how excellent teaching is characterized—particularly in counselor education—and, how excellent teaching impacts graduate students’ learning outcomes. Future studies linking students’ perceived experiences of teaching excellence and students’ learning outcomes are needed.

4. Ethical Considerations

A comprehensive review of teaching ethics is beyond the scope of this brief. However, there are three take away points for readers regarding teaching excellence and professional responsibilities. The first is that ethical teachers focus on the growth and learning of their students as the prime directive (Bain, 2004). Second, it is clear that responsible teachers need to be authentic (Brookfield, 2006) in the classroom, and mindful of their responsibilities: (a) to take complex ideas and explain them in understandable ways to students, (b) to examine teaching successes and failures relevant to student learning outcomes, and (c) to assist students with applying learning to their future counseling roles.

Finally, when considering teaching excellence it is important to consider one’s motivations for wanting to be excellent; noting a difference between (a) wanting one’s teaching performance to make a difference in fostering students’ learning (Bain, 2004), and (b) wanting one’s teaching performance to be rewarded, or to count as an act of scholarship (Kreber, 2002a). Some educators will want to pursue both (a) and (b). Regardless of one’s pursuits, keeping students’ learning needs at the forefront of all teaching endeavors is the right and ethical thing to do.

So, it is plausible that a starting point for developing teaching excellence in counselor education is through an understanding of one’s teaching beliefs (e.g., who you are and what you know). One way to begin this process is to ask yourself: What did I like about my favorite teachers? Some scholars agree that an understanding of one’s beliefs about teaching serves as the foundation for (a) reflective teaching practice, (b) communication with colleagues about teaching, (c) evaluation of teaching efforts, and (d) the improvement of teaching practice (Brookfield, 2006; West, Bubenzer, & Gimenez Hinkle, 2013). Teaching beliefs may be first consolidated through the development of a teaching philosophy statement (West et al, 2013). These teaching beliefs are modeled by faculty members in counselor education classrooms (Baltrinic et al, 2016), and often articulated and reinforced during formal and informal mentoring.
exchanges between faculty members and graduate students (Baltrinic & Moate, 2016). Overall, professionals demonstrating teaching excellence are thought to have a strong and coherent philosophy of teaching and learning along with positive self–efficacy beliefs guiding their teaching (MacDonald Grieve, 2010).

5. **Questions to Consider/Future Directions**

- When you consider the concept of teaching excellence, what does it mean to you?
- Do you use a reflective practice approach to developing your teaching? What are your strengths and areas of growth? How do you document your development?
- Do you know where to find information and research on teaching excellence to help you with scholarly teaching pursuits?
- How do you see yourself giving back to students through your teaching? Giving back to the profession through the scholarship of teaching process?

6. **Resources**

Counselor educators seeking to enact teaching excellence guided by teaching standards can view several K-12 and higher education teacher standards listed below in addition to the recommendations contained in this report. Adapting standards to guide principle-driven adaptive teaching efforts (Bain, 2004) can foster the development of teaching excellence in favor of student learning over teacher expertise. Additionally, most universities offer faculty development services geared to quality teaching. Many faculty development sites provide resources and assistance to new and experienced college teachers seeking to improve their teaching practice. A number of teaching-related journals are also listed below for those faculty members seeking research to guide their practice, and for those faculty members seeking publication venues for scholarly contributions to the teaching literature.

**A. K-12 TEACHING STANDARDS**

**United States**

Colorado Teacher Quality Standards
- [https://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/teacherqualitystandardsreferenceguide](https://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/teacherqualitystandardsreferenceguide)

Missouri Teacher Standards
- [https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/TeacherStandards.pdf](https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/TeacherStandards.pdf)

Rhode Island Teaching Standards
Ohio Teaching Standards

International
United Kingdom: Teaching Standards

United Kingdom: Excellent Teachers (begins on p. 6)

New Zealand

Scotland: Rewarding Excellent Teachers
- http://www.academia.edu/21479763/Developing_and_rewarding_excellent_teachers_the_Scottish_Chartered_Teacher_Scheme

B. HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING STANDARDS

United States
NEA: Higher Education Best Practices - Teaching & Learning
- http://www.nea.org/home/33508.htm

Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education: Characteristics of Individual Excellence
- http://www.cas.edu/individual_excellence

International
International Organization for Standardization
Standards for teaching in Higher Education

United Kingdom
Reading University: Standards of University Teaching

Australia
Australian University Teaching Criteria and Standards Framework
C. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT WEBSITES

United States
Vanderbilt University: Center for Teaching
  • https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/teaching-guides/pedagogies-and-strategies/
University of Massachusetts Amherst: Institute for Teaching Excellence and Faculty Development
  • https://www.umass.edu/ctfd/index.shtml
California State University Fullerton: Faculty Development Center
  • http://fdc.fullerton.edu/
Emory University: Center for Faculty Development and Excellence
  • http://cfde.emory.edu/
The University of North Carolina Charlotte: The Center for Teaching and Learning

D. TEACHING-RELATED JOURNALS

Kennesaw State University: Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
Teaching Journals Directory
  • http://cetl.kennesaw.edu/teaching-journals-directory
Association of College & Research Libraries
A Selective List of Journals on Teaching & Learning
  • http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/directoryofleadership/sections/is/iswebsite/projpubs/journalsteachinglearning
Early Career Higher Education Research Network
Higher Education Journals List -- with impact factor and publisher information
  • http://www.echer.org/?page_id=66
University of Washington: Center for Teaching and Learning
Journals on Teaching and Learning Research – interdisciplinary publications
  • http://www.washington.edu/teaching/journals-on-teaching-and-learning-research-interdisciplinary-publications/

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1. Overview of the Topic and its Relationship to Counselor Education

In Counselor Education, the most fundamental question, of course, would be one relating to the purpose of the program. Following, in somewhat sequential order, would be question relating to how we prepare individuals for counseling: What is the process for which we are preparing individuals? What is the criteria for success for those who complete academic programs?

The above questions were posed by Caskey in 1974 in a speech at the University of New Mexico. Forty-two years later, counselor educators still wrestle with these fundamental questions. The entirety of this report on best practices in teaching in counselor education has to do with answering these questions in addition to the ongoing struggle of determining how counselor educators can best prepare future counselors and counselor educators.

The central focus of this segment of the report is the actual counselor education program. In their 2016 standards document, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP) defined the term “program” as the degree level (e.g. master’s or doctoral). However, however, the focus of counselor education programs is defined in the same document as

the training and preparation of professional counselors who are competent to practice, abide by the ethics of the counseling profession, and hold strong counseling identities. At the doctoral level, counselor education programs may focus on the preparation and training of future academic professionals who will teach the curriculum of counseling theory and practice and include specialized practice areas…(CACREP, 2016, p. 40).

Yet the “program” also encompasses faculty, host department or academic unit, students, curriculum and training experiences, and the college and community in which the program resides. Any counselor education program also includes the norms, traditions, beliefs, values, practices, and climate that are the products of the interactions of all of these components. In essence, each counselor education program has a culture (Oliver & Hyun, 2011). This culture shapes the processes that have direct impact on students including admissions, teaching, evaluation and mentoring.

The term “program” may be used interchangeably with “curriculum,” a connection which makes sense insofar as the program is WHAT content and skill sets are being taught and WHEN those content or skill sets are being taught. The term “curriculum” typically refers to the content being taught in a school, university, course, or program. The term can be defined differently depending on how broad or narrow a lens is applied. According to the Glossary of Education Reform (2015), curriculum is the sum of the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn regardless of setting or context. Curriculum can also encompass lesson plans, unit development,
books and projects assigned, learning standards, and student assessments of learning. For the purposes of this section, we define curriculum as

*the knowledge and skills students must master throughout the time they are in their program in order to be culturally competent and ethical practitioners. Opportunities and experiences for that mastery are provided in an intentional, scaffolded, and sequential manner that matches adult learning processes and a developmental trajectory towards growth but which also allows for flexibility dependent on individual student learning.*

We believe that while curriculum has overlap with pedagogy, that they are in fact different concepts. **Pedagogy** “a term that refers to the art or science of teaching, is regularly found in the discourse of scholars who educate teachers, but rarely in the discourse of counselor educators” (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998, p. 71). The term actually has its roots in the teaching and learning of children. As counselor education is a graduate degree area, the correct term here would be **andragogy**, or the “art and science” of teaching adults (Knowles, 1970, 1988).

Plans for curriculum frequently rest on documents that outline the **scope and sequence** of skills and knowledge. Although scope and sequence typically pertain to K-12 education, any program can utilize this method of planning at any level. Scope refers to objectives students must meet (often linked to standards); sequence refers to the order in which objectives are introduced and taught. Working together, scope and sequence documents provide a roadmap for the teaching of specific content and skills in counselor education programs. Creating scope and sequence documents requires planning and intentional thinking about the program, its purpose, and the specific content and skills students must master to become effective counselors. Counselor educators with backgrounds in school counseling may feel more comfortable with these types of products as the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2012)) recommends using scope and sequence documents for planning how classroom guidance curricula are delivered within a school building and in connection with other grade levels.

The concept of curriculum is typically defined, researched, and applied in professional fields which are connected to counselor education such as teaching and teacher preparation, gifted education, higher education and student affairs, and educational policy and leadership. Depending on the location of the counselor education program, program faculty may find their closest allies in discussions about curriculum sequence and programmatic structure in departments in the same building. Counselor education program faculty are the resident skills and content experts. However skilled in counseling practices, counselor education faculty members and doctoral students may not have been exposed to programmatic design and curriculum development principles.

Hence, curriculum development and program planning in counselor education may be an assumed knowledge base and/or skill set for many faculty members. **Thus, the purpose of this section of the report is to provide a brief overview of what is known about program design and curriculum development in counselor education as well as a proposed process for counselor education faculty members as they review, reevaluate and plan program-level curricula.** Throughout this section, we cite a range of research and literature in counselor education including seminal articles regarding pedagogy and program design and other sources that reflect more recent conversations about how we teach counselors and counselor educators in order to prepare them for a modern profession.
The current section may challenge current doctoral students and counselor education program faculty to think differently about how they conceptualize curriculum, programming and student learning. Due to time constraints and overly-full work plates, program faculty may address curriculum changes as a class-by-class fix or in reaction to new university requirements, budgetary limitations, or changes in accreditation standards. Some programs have cultures in which program faculty operate highly autonomously and may not have had any precedent for discussing the program as a whole versus a series of discrete courses.

2. Relevant Research and Literature Support

Since Caskey’s speech in 1974, counselor education as a field has invested time and research in to determine how programs can best prepare students for their work as counselors and counselor educators. However, the published literature has been sporadic in both focus and time. It is beyond the scope of this section to provide a complete literature review regarding curriculum development and programmatic structure in counselor education. Yet, a broad analysis of themes and concepts that have driven the conversations around program and curriculum development in counselor education is provided here. Below is a list of concepts that have been utilized by programs to help decision-making and planning behind master’s and doctoral counselor education curricula.

- **Developmental Learning and Growth Models:** Probably the most utilized set of theories and concepts that drive the content and sequence of classes are those that promote cognitive, moral, and ego development (among many areas) over time. This would seem a logical match as counselors are prepared to work with the developmental level of their clients. Specific theories have included cognitive development as proposed by Piaget (1954), Kohlberg’s (1981) theory of moral and ethical development, Loevinger’s (1976) theory of ego development, and conceptual systems theory as proposed by Hunt (1975). Choate and Granello (2006, p. 118) wrote that these theories describe how

  
  individuals progress through a series of sequential, hierarchical stages in which they interact with the environment in qualitatively different and increasingly more complex ways. Broadly, these the theories describe how individuals move from a concrete, dualistic, right/wrong way of thinking about the world, through a more flexible perspective where they have limited ability to make choices about their relative merits of information (termed multiplistic approach to knowing; Perry, 1970). Finally, an individual develops a more abstract, empathic and relativistic perspective (Granello, 2002; Perry, 1970).

- **Counselor Developmental Models:** Counselor educators may be more aware of the work on counselor development through research conducted by Rønnestad and Skovholt (1993, 2003), and Stoltenberg, McNeill, and Delworth (1998). Rønnestad and Skovholt (1993, 2003), suggested six phases of counselor development (the first three experienced by students in counseling programs and the latter three by practicing counselors). The first three phases proposed (the lay helper phase, beginning student phase, and advanced student phase) roughly align with Stoltenberg & Delworth, (1987), and Stoltenberg, McNeill and Delworth’s (1987, 1998) Integrated Development Model (IDM) (1998) which suggested student supervisees progress through three levels of
development. Granello and Hazler (1998) also cited Bruss and Kopala’s (1993) object-relations approach to the development of psychology students, Kreiser and authors’ (1991) analogy of family, and Stewart’s (1995) developmental model for counseling students that outlines different stages of their development in graduate college. McAuliffe (2011d) suggested that by understanding how counselors develop over time, counselor educators can create programs and tailor teaching to meet students’ changing needs over time by providing the appropriate level of “mismatch” to facilitate positive growth, reflective practice, and cognitive complexity.

- **Adult Learning and College Student Learning Theories:** Although these theories are predominantly developmental in nature, they may be less well known by counselor educators compared to faculty colleagues in higher education. Adult developmental models share tenets such as learner-directed learning, the honoring of and incorporation of a learners’ individual past experiences in the learning process, the acknowledgement that adult learners have multiple competing priorities in life, and the need for flexibility in learning environments (Granello & Hazler, 1998). By themselves, these models and theories (e.g., Perry’s theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development) are not sufficient to entirely guide a counselor education curriculum (Cite). They should be wed with other developmental learning and growth theories and models. For more information on adult learning and college student theories, please Section One. We suggest examining the table prepared by Granello and Hazler (1998, p. 93) which compares and contrasts adult development models, college student development models, counseling development models, and novice-to-expert models.

- **Educational Theories:** Learning theories also drive how counselor educators can develop curriculum, and there are many learning theories from which to choose. McAuliffe (2011b) highlighted the work of John Dewey and David Kolb who provided theories of learning that are complimentary to developmental models like that of Kohlberg. Dewey’s work stressed student interest and effort, engagement in learning and conditions in the classroom that facilitate experiential learning (McAuliffe, 2011b). Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory presented conditions that facilitate complex learning through experience, observation, experimentation, and conceptualization (McAuliffe, 2011b). These four modes then intersect with individual student learning styles (McAuliffe, 2011b). For more specifics about these theories, in addition to the application of developmental models, we suggest chapters 2, 3 and 4 in McAuliffe’s and Erikson’s (2011) *Handbook of Counselor Preparation: Constructivist, Developmental and Exertional Approaches*.

3. **Components of Programs and Curriculum**

There are several factors that influence a counselor preparation program’s design, structure, and implementation. These factors include but are not limited to the following:

- **Number of Programs that are Preparing Counselors:** Some preparation programs have multiple master’s “tracks” or specialty areas through which students are matriculating (e.g., School counseling, marriage and family, mental health). In addition, some programs include both master’s and doctoral degrees. Although CACREP defines
program as the degree area, program faculty may see the “program” as encompassing all of the specialty areas. Depending on the organization of the department in which the program(s) reside, there may be one or more faculty members who coordinate individual tracks or are responsible for them all.

- **Type of Program:** The era of the internet has significantly changed the way higher education conceptualizes how and when students learn. Many counselor education programs have embraced online learning and hybridized classes. Some counselor education programs include online classes, hybrid classes, and remote campuses (classes taught live in a different location) in addition to traditional “brick and mortar” live classes. Counselor education programs likewise vary in their staggering of program “starts.” Programs can range from highly individualistic curricula (in which students take classes when they can and sequence is less important to student availability) to highly structured programs that utilize cohort models of learning. Like any other part of the discussions around curriculum, how the program “looks” and whether or not it meets students’ needs is paramount conversation. Depending on the geography of the state and the number of available programs, there may be a need for distance learning or remote campus cohort models. Additional issues include a) the number of students matriculating through each class which has direct implications for class size, advising loads, and group supervision numbers; and b) types of students (e.g., non-traditional students, students in career transition, students who work full-time, and students participating in distance education). Both the number and type of learners in a program need to be a significant part of curricular conversations as they are the predominant stakeholders in the decision-making. We suggest ensuring student representation on planning teams and advisory boards whenever possible.

- **Accreditation Standards and Licensure Requirements:** Programs which are accredited by CACREP or other organizations are responsible for delivering a specific set of content and skills, measuring student learning, facilitating positive student development, and developing processes for student admissions and gatekeeping. Depending on the specialty area of the program, curriculum is also prescribed by the specific knowledge and skills program graduates must have in order to obtain their initial license for practice in their state and/or passing credentialing exams.

- **ACA Ethical Codes:** The American Counseling Association’s (ACA) Code of Ethics (ACA, 2014) encourages counselor educators and supervisors to have “theoretical and pedagogical foundations for their work” (p. 12). Part of both preparing future counselors and practicing as ethical counselor educators requires program faculty to understand the nature of adult learning and apply these foundations to their work. Whether the format is in a traditional classroom, hybrid or online environment, the ethical codes outline clear expectations for competency with skills in both teaching and practice. The ACA ethical codes also make provisions for the use of innovative theories and techniques that are “grounded in theory and/or have an empirical or scientific foundation” (p. 14) and stress the importance of preparing counselors in multicultural and diversity issues. Relevant to this section, the ACA ethical codes cover gate-keeping functions for counselor educators as well as the need to orient counseling students to the nature of what to expect in the classroom. Self-awareness and growth is expected for counseling students, and the codes
require us to inform students about parts of the program that “encourage self-growth or self-disclosure as part of the training process” (p. 14).

- Time to Degree: Many colleges and universities use time to degree as an indicator of their success. Time to degree refers to the average amount of time a student or group of students matriculates through the program. Typically, master’s programs are completed within 2 to 2.5 years if students enroll full-time, or at about 12 credit hours a semester. This may vary as far as three years to degree if the program does not offer summer classes frequently. Doctoral programs may average between 4 to 5 years for completion. However, time to degree can be impacted by a variety of factors including credit hours required by the program and course offering schedules. For faculty working on CACREP accreditation under the 2016 standards, this may require a discussion of how to balance 60 credit hours, or a three-year time to degree, in the master’s preparation programs with their university’s desire for a short time to degree.

- Financial Considerations: Concerns regarding how money is allocated and spent in programs and departments become a part of the larger discussion of how programs function and curriculum is designed. These are typically multifaceted concerns including, but not limited to, how students can afford to pay for higher education (e.g., does the program provide assistantships for masters’ students and doctoral students?), how faculty are rewarded for courses taught off-load, and whether programs and departments can support new faculty hires and adjunct instructors.

- Faculty Load and Rotation: Depending on contractual obligations, faculty members teach a certain number of classes a year, perhaps in addition to overload classes or opportunities. With each course taught, faculty may have to invest a great deal of time in preparation, especially if it is the first time the faculty member has taught it. Thus, many program faculty members like to maintain courses they have already prepared. However, if the program curriculum changes in terms of sequence or content, faculty members must determine the degree of their individual commitment to those changes including new preparation (“preps”) of courses and/or giving up control over supposed curricular “territory.” Likewise, as new faculty members join the program, the rotation of classes may change and the content of classes may be delivered differently based on the instructor. Other classes that are sequenced into the curriculum may not be taught by programmatic or departmental faculty. Rather, these courses are situated in other departments or even other academic colleges within the university. Counselor education programs who choose to utilize these classes because, logistically, it may be impossible to teach everything required by the curriculum, may have little say in when these courses are offered or who teaches them. Thus, it behooves program faculty to collaborate with other faculty from different departments and include them in conversation of curriculum content that may change if it impacts the out-of-program class.

- Program Auxiliary Resources: Counselor education program frequently make use of university and college resources in the experiences they provide for student learning. Many programs utilize college/university clinics or in-house departmental/program clinics as part of their training opportunities for students in practicum and internship courses. Likewise, programs also collaborate with community agencies and local schools for site placements. Changes in the curriculum have direct implications for training both
off and on campus and can affect site supervisor’s capacity to provide the positive learning experiences programs wish their students to have. Stakeholders from these groups often constitute the program’s advisory board and should be consulted frequently when changes in the curriculum are being discussed. Additional resources that programs may have access to include: a) technology for classroom use course delivery in on-line and hybrid learning formats; b) student organizations such as local university chapters of Chi Sigma Iota, ARCA, or ASCA; c) availability of doctoral student supervisors/mentors; d) community relationships or partnerships for service learning, preservice courses, and practicum/internship; and e) agreements with other programs on campus.

- **Student Mastery, Learning Outcomes, and Success in the Field of Practice:** Another significant issue that drives curriculum development is the performance of current students and the current practicing alumni of the program. Determining student mastery of content and skills and the degree of students’ professional behavior and preparation is vital to program gatekeeping and entry in to the field. Accredited programs and those whose licensing bodies require feedback from programs typically survey their alumni about their reflection upon what they learned, how they learned it, and what improvements the program could make. Alumni responses can provide faculty with perceptions and experiences they may not have considered. In addition, because alumni are affected by the current state of professional practice and the communities in which they conduct their practice, programs can consider curricular “holes” that, which filled, could help better prepare students for their work. For more information on student learning outcomes and gatekeeping, please see Section One on Adult Learning Models.

4. **Application**

When it comes to definitive guides and “how-to’s” that can help faculty decision-making and curriculum review or planning, there is little to be had that is specific to counselor education. However, we recommend several articles that address curriculum review, evaluation, and planning as a process that draws on the knowledge and values of faculty members and is influenced by internal and external factors. These are the following case studies of programs (one in counselor education and one not) who have engaged in this process:


Although there is no one right way to structure a counselor preparation program, we suggest the following steps. These steps could be followed in the creation of a new counselor education program; however, this is a time-intensive process that includes more stakeholders (e.g., provost, dean, accreditation board members, etc.) than the process behind review and retooling of existing programs and curricula. In some cases, programs and departments are required to conduct their own internal reviews for accreditation purposes, state board reviews, or collegiate or university requirements.

**Step One: Create a Working Group or Team.** Groups members would typically include designated program faculty and, when possible, faculty members from the host department and any other faculty members who contribute to the program by teaching classes outside of the host department. Retired or professors emeriti who have taught in the program or department are also valuable as they can provide insight and historical knowledge regarding how the curriculum and program have changed over time. The group may also benefit from consulting with designated members of state licensing boards, accreditation boards, and/or university groups depending on the nature of the review. Last, groups should consider including student representatives and alumni members who can provide their own unique perspectives of the current structure. If programs and department have advisory boards, a representative may also be included as a team member.

**Step Two: Confirm the Scope.** Depending on the nature of the program review and/or curriculum resequencing, the process of sequencing and evaluation could take anywhere between a half day meeting to a full year or more. Group members need to determine the scope of the task and the requirements that the group must fulfill including what final products are to be created through the group. In addition, the group must decide if this is the working group which can best conduct the process or if another group such as a departmental committee is a more sensible option. Regardless of the decision, group members need to commit to the time and work that the scope of the project entails. In addition, group members should determine when they will meet, how long they will meet, and who is responsible for specific tasks (e.g., note-taker, facilitator, coordinator, etc.). Some roles maybe be predefined depending on whether or not individual members already have service or leadership within the program or department. To avoid faculty burnout, tasks can be rotated on a schedule throughout the process of review.

**Step Three: Come Prepared.** Reviewing program structure or curriculum sequence requires group members to have the current designs and other documentation that influences the curriculum at their fingertips. Fortunately, in the era of online document sharing, these documents can be distributed to group members through cloud systems or other online programs. Examples of documents that may be needed include: a) current sample student/cohort plans of study; b) relevant accreditation standards and licensure/certification requirements; c) prior drafts or older documents that detail previous versions of curricula; d) yearly faculty load and rotation;
e) reports from the program to university groups and/or to accreditation or state boards; f) current wording reflected on program publications and websites.; g) data on student learning outcomes and evaluations of student progress and performance in the program; h) alumni feedback; i) course-level feedback from students; j) exit interviews; and k) site supervisor data and feedback. Groups should also look at the space where these meetings will be held. Often, groups can benefit from having a chalkboard or whiteboard for sketching out class sequences and faculty loads or for brainstorming. This can also be done via computers and projectors. A space that allows for drafts, products, and documents to be spread out may also be helpful for a group.

**Step Four: Conversations.** On the surface, it would appear that program review and/or curriculum is a paper process. However, when considering compacting the program, shortening time to degree, or creating new courses and requirements, group members may find that some of their own values and ideals are questioned or challenged.

> What of starting the conversation with the end in mind? What do students need to know or be able to do when they leave the program? What do we value in our graduates/practitioners? ONLY after we can answer those questions and answer them well are we really ready to start building curricula that will help us do that (C. Barrio Minton, personal communication, July 15, 2016).

Questioning ideas and beliefs are a part of any group process, but questioning can come as a surprise to some group members. Consider that faculty which constitute the program can change over time. Program needs change as well. At some point there may be a discussion of “why do we have this class? What is its purpose?” or, when compacting curriculum, the question may arise “can we delete this class?” Faculty members who have taught a particular class several times may feel this is challenging their territory or a value or ideal that the feel very strongly belongs in counselor education. To improve group functioning, especially prior to creating drafts of possible revisions, group members may wish to discuss what they do hold as values when it comes to the program, the students, and what they believe to be true about teaching and learning. Even coming with a list of “I believe…” to exchange and discuss may help with negotiating these waters. Faculty may wish to consult some of the very questions that other researcher’s and writers in counselor education have wrestled with in their writings on programs and curriculum including Caskey’s (1974) twelve questions to guide decision-making in programs. **We have provided a list of questions at the end of this section that may help with conversations what the program values, reflections on past curricula, and explorations of what the program wishes to accomplish with their curriculum.**

**Step Five: Determine Changes.** Flowing from these conversations, the nature of the desired change should be discussed. Changes are dependent on the scope of the task. In some cases, entire programs must be overhauled, and in others, a class or two may need to be changed, or reassigned to a different instructor. Many times these changes are naturally resolved through semester course planning or through quick conversations with program faculty. However, when more time is needed, the process requires more thought, brainstorming, and planning. In addition, the driving force behind making changes in the curriculum or program needs to be considered.

**Step Six. Generate Options.** Groups may find that the brainstorming process useful at this time. Team members can discuss and create ideas for changes that they would like to see that would meet the need for the change they have at the current time. In the process, new visions for the
program and curriculum may come to light. The brainstorming process is vital in order to identify how individual faculty members are conceptualizing the needed changes, and it can provide new ideas that should be considered by the team. Once all ideas are generated, then the evaluation phase can begin. Faculty members who have been a part of the program for several years may have a keen eye for potential blockages of ideas including financial and human resource constraints. However, newer faculty members relatively new to the program may have untapped resources or connections that can make new ideas a reality. Both experiences and perspectives are important for the team to hear.

**Step Seven: Crafting Drafts.** Depending on the scope of review or programmatic “tweaking,” groups may require anywhere between one draft of the potential future curriculum and program changes or several. Documents can include **scope and sequence plans, individual or cohort plans of study, a list of changes between past curricula and the current sequence.** Other planning documents might include EXCEL files that provide an overview of the program’s curriculum in addition to the programs that work cooperatively to them including faculty load and semester. Thus all team, program and department members can fully visualize what classes will be needed when, where holes in coverage are, and what classes are shared in common across the department. As changes are documented, there may also be a need to verify or change class descriptions in course catalogues and/or websites. Last, the group needs to decide **when changes will be implemented.** In cohort models, significant changes may be pushed back to the beginning of the sequence and/or the year/semester of entry. In doing so, programs must anticipate balancing the old curriculum for currently matriculating students with the newly implemented curriculum. Changes tend to complicate practicum and internships classes specifically, and issues such as group supervision numbers need to be planned for ahead of time.

**Step Eight: Communicating Changes.** Typically, when changes in program sequencing and class structure are made, programs must inform other stakeholders including departments, colleges, graduate colleges, and state licensing/certification bodies. In some cases, these stakeholders may have the power of oversight insofar as they have some input on what changes occur when and may also have the ability to safeguard students’ matriculation. Examples of this may include administrative offices (e.g., Registrar, Graduate School) that verify plans of study and applications for graduation and licensing or certification bodies (e.g., State Departments of Education, state licensing boards) that provide credentials based on students’ completion of program requirements. Other stakeholders include accrediting organizations. Obviously, team members should keep these stakeholders informed and/or consult with them during the entire change process in order to be aware of and avoid any potential pitfalls in the implementation of the curriculum. Groups may also wish to consult their own program websites when the program is undergoing review or if curriculum is being updated. If curriculum changes are to be made, websites will need to be updated to reflect those changes. These virtual changes are vital as future program applicants need to be informed as to what their future may hold should they choose to apply to the program. More and more, program websites are the virtual “face” of the program; applicants consult these regularly and thus the websites need to be as current as possible. **Current students need to be alerted once changes are made and faculty should be prepared to discuss how the changes will affect them, if at all.** Most changes in curriculum are made with a future orientation; that is, changes will affect only incoming students and cohorts. Current students in programs which are revising curriculum generally are not affected by these changes, and would matriculate under the old program.
curriculum. However, in some instances, curricular changes may be far enough reaching that programs may wish to consider having students elect to follow their original plans of study or the newly created one. Program faculty should keep in mind that student choice will require advisors to keep abreast of what plans their advisees are graduating under and will also require them to keep in contact with the necessary personnel from the registrar’s office, graduate college and licensing/certifying organization.

**Step Nine: Plan to Reassess:** Depending on the degree of change and when it is implemented, program faculty may not be in place where they can evaluate the impact the change has had by the end of one academic year. In some cases, if new classes are included in the curriculum, faculty may wish to plan for multiple assessment points from current students and from the alumni a year after they graduate. Typically, the ripple effects of curricular change may not be felt until students have graduated. Faculty may not know the effects of a new class that is added in the first year of a student’s program until those students graduate several years later. Thus, alumni surveys may need to be tailored to the specific plans of the graduating class. Program faculty may also wish to consult other faculty members who teach classes outside the department but whose classes are sequenced after the point where the new class begins in the curriculum. Regardless of the degree of change, program faculty should plan to assess how the change has impacted the overall program, what worked in the process, and what did not in order to prepare for the upcoming academic year.

5. **Considerations for Diverse Learners and Multicultural Implications**

As Fong (1998) pointed out, theories and models of learning have their limits. As teachers in K-12 education know, not every student learns the same way at the same time. Fong (1998) notes that counselors-in-training may arrive at the same point of development in multiple ways; thus programs must be flexible enough to support individual trajectories of learning. In addition, many of the college student development models were based on white male students (Granello & Hazler, 1998). Currently, there is little research that examines how counselor education programs have made space for social justice in their curriculum, or how it is taught (Odegard & Vereen, 2010, Mallot, 2010). However, both the CACREP 2016 standards AND the ACA Ethical Codes require counselor education programs to address, integrate and infuse multicultural awareness, knowledge and skills, social justice, leadership and advocacy (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016).

Sexton, (1998, p. 68) described the error of teaching traditional counseling theories “that are taught in almost all counselor education programs are inherently logical and positivist in nature individually oriented and based on assumptions that promote the principles of Euro-American culture as the correct way in which to think…..” However, the same argument could be made for current counseling program curricula in their entirety. Without a through conversation at programmatic tables, programs “inadvertently support these assumptions” (Sexton, 1998, p. 68) and program design becomes “business as usual” (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998, p. 78). If this is the case, programs’ philosophies, values, scope and sequence need to be revisited. Specifically, counselor education programs must address the following questions:

- **How do counselor educators design programs and curricula to be responsive to needs and interests of diverse students?**
• How does nature of student body influence what, when, how we educate future counselors and counselor educators?

Perhaps more importantly, counselor education as a profession needs to address these questions as well. More dialogue is needed around placing cultural competence and social justice at the center of the curriculum as suggested by many authors the profession (Ametrano, Callaway & Stickel, 2002; Brady-Amoon, Makhija, Dixit, & Dator, 2012; Chung & Bemak, 2007; Midgett & Meggert, 1991, Ridely, Mendoza, & Kanitz, 1994). Chung and Bemak (2007, p. 235) write

Furthermore, we would strongly suggest that if training programs are serious about incorporating social justice and human rights issues, then it is critical that these themes be infused throughout all phases of training programs, from the beginning foundation and introductory courses to the culminating practicums and internships. Failure to integrate these issues throughout all aspects of the program is paying lip service to these potent issues and inadvertently adding to and maintaining social injustices and potential human rights violations.

To come full circle, no matter what theory, model, or body of research counselor preparation programs use to guide decision-making about curriculum, the program itself is a culture, and that culture rests on the values, beliefs, and assumptions each faculty member brings to the discussion. As Sexton (1998, p. 1998) writes with regard to using a unified set of standards to drive counselor education curriculum, “…it is essential to remember that these standards are opinions grounded in the prevailing professional beliefs. Professional beliefs are further embedded in the cultural bias of the times in which they were developed.” In essence, counselor education, like many other professions, teaches what it values. And those values may and should be challenged and changed.

The micro-culture of the program is also influenced by societal changes. Counselor education programs must prepare alumni to capably and ethically address client concerns which are also influenced by the client’s community. Thus preparation programs, licensure requirements, and professional standards must be, to a degree, reflexive in nature in order to accommodate for new skills and ways of thinking needed in the field. As the counseling profession grows and changes, so must preparation programs. We have already seen changes in how we teach and practice multicultural competences, train counselors to be social justice advocates, engage in wellness, incorporate spirituality, and reassess how to train school counselors in light of changing student demographics and needs (Hayes, Dagley & Horne, 1996).

6. Unanswered Questions/Future Directions

• How do we integrate best teaching practices with overall programmatic considerations?

• What are strategies counselor educators can use specifically with counseling students to encourage self-reflection and skill development?

In light of the broader questions of programmatic and curricular exploration raised above, there is a need to look at best practices in teaching specific to counselor education. A review of the literature revealed that counselor education has traditionally adopted models from related fields such as family therapy, social work and education in preparing students for clinical practice (e.g. Anderson, 1991; Monk & Winslade, 2000). Counselor educators can benefit from examining both the counseling-based literature and the literature on instructional practices (Barrio-Minton,
Wachter-Morris & Yaites, 2014). A focus on teaching competence, relationships with students, and teacher attitudes is central to effective teaching at the graduate level (Hill, 2014, p. 60). Structuring intentional learning experiences and developing an effective learning environment have been identified as evidenced-based teaching best practices in higher education (Malott, Hall, Sheely-Moore, Krell, & Cardaciotto, 2014, p. 295-296). Specific to counselor education, Ray, Jayne and Miller (2014) found that a number of counselor educators engage in clinical practice and see that practice as helpful in their teaching and supervision (p. 90).

Almost two decades ago, Nelson & Neufeldt (1998) highlighted the need for counselor educators to employ pedagogy that assists students in developing strong conceptual skills and to facilitate students’ development of strategies to understand and address client concerns. They identified problem-based learning as central to this approach. Since then, others have noted the need for counseling students to engage in experiential learning along with on-going opportunities for both feedback and reflection. Several articles on service learning have been published outlining the benefits specifically for counseling students (Arman & Scherer, 2002; Baggerly, 2006; Burnett, Hamel & Long, 2004).

Fundamental to our work as counselor educators is assisting students in bridging the gap from theory to practice. Facilitating counseling students’ self-awareness related to theoretical fit and skill development are central to teaching in counselor education (Dollarhide, Smith & Lemberger, 2007; Gillam, 2004; and Guiffrida, 2005). Counseling students need to find a theory that fits with their own views of growth and change and develop this orientation in a self-reflective manner (Guiffrida, 2005). Guiffrida (2005) describes the Emergence Model, in which counseling students are prepared to use theory in self-reflective ways, introducing students to theory and interventions through observations of their own practice (p. 201). Dollarhide, Smith and Lemberger (2007) explore the pedagogical strategy “Transparent Counseling Pedagogy (TCP)” in which students view, reflect on and react to the application of theory in realistic clinical practice demonstrations in the classroom (p. 244). Gillam (2004) provides a framework for teaching group counseling courses that encourages educators to become self-reflective about their teaching in order to facilitate students’ conceptualization of theories and skills related to group work.

In summary, the limited research into effective teaching practices in counselor education suggests that fundamental issues include a focus on case conceptualization, bridging theory to practice and student skill development. More research is needed to apply findings from related fields to best practices in teaching in counselor education.

7. Resources


Questions for Conversation

Values and Beliefs

- What do students need to know or be able to do when they leave the program?
- What do we value in our graduates/practitioners?
- How do counselor educators design programs and curricula to be responsive to needs and interests of diverse students?
- How does nature of student body influence what, when, how we educate future counselors and counselor educators?
- What’s the culture of students and their needs? How does current curriculum fit with that? Does it?
- What do we do well as a program? What could we reassess and change?

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills

- What is absolutely needed prior to engagement with clients in practicum and internship?
- What is nice to have but not necessary?
- What would have most meaning later in the program?

Knowledge and Skills Sequence

- What knowledge/content and/or skills do we consider foundational? What’s applied?
- When, developmentally, will students most benefit from a specific experience (ex: individual techniques, group counseling, practicum)?
- What do students need to be ready for this experience?

Homogeneity vs. heterogeneity of Student Groups

- Which experiences are best for groups of similar students (e.g., cohort year, track)?
- Which benefit from mixing of levels and interests? Why?

Curriculum Content

- What’s enough/too much for course or bundle of courses together?
- Are we feeling pushed to add to the curriculum (Why? By what?)
- What could/should be added? Why?
- At what point must we also take out from the curriculum? How will we navigate this?
• How might changes in some courses impact changes in others?
• How might these changes in curriculum need to drive changes in assessment?
• What of the informal curriculum? Are there out of course requirements or experiences at the program-level (e.g., portfolios, comprehensive exams)? How do these fit together?

Change Questions

• **Nature of the change:** What is creating the need for a review/change? Is this a review for the college? Accrediting body? Is it a specific change to meet the needs of an inside or outside stakeholder? In response to something within the program?

• **The current situation:** What is working right now in the program? what is not working? what are our strengths? What are areas that need to be addressed or improved?

• **Changing the current situation:** How is this need for change impacting our current situation? What is at stake for the program? Students? Staff?

• **Consider the past:** Have we had to contend with this change before? When? How as it resolved? How did this lead us to where we are right now?

8. References


Executive Summary

The purpose of this report was to document the taskforce’s efforts to create a series of “best practices” in teaching in counselor education. The ten sections of the report provide research-based, literature-informed suggestions for doctoral students and practicing counselor educators to practice in their programs and classrooms. However, each section generated questions and future directions for the profession of counselor education. The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) mission statement proposes that this organization, in accordance with ACA “is to advance counselor education and supervision in order to improve the provision of counseling services in all settings.” ACES members “strive to improve the education and supervision of counselors in training and in practice,” and “have been and continue to be trailblazers in terms of the competencies for supervision, counselor training, research, multicultural competence, and advocacy.”

As the vanguard of the counselor education profession ACES can lead counselor education in continuing to investigate and invest in the processes of teaching and learning in counselor education. To that end, we have listed a series of specific points derived from the report, questions about teaching and learning in counselor education, and suggestions for how ACES can take the lead in each of these areas.

1. Teaching within counselor education serves two prime directives: (1) to prepare competent counselors (at the master’s level), and (2) to prepare advanced practitioners, supervisors, and counselor educators (at the doctoral level). Counselor education programs and faculty have a responsibility to prepare doctoral students who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to prepare professional counselors who are ethical and effective in their service to vulnerable populations. Counselor education programs need both formal and informal mechanisms for the teaching preparation of doctoral students. Developmental frameworks are the hallmark of our profession. With new experiences we grow engage in a developmental process that informs ourselves as counselor educators.

   a. In order for ACES and programs to determine how to best provide those mechanism, they must first examine how counselor educators learn to teach. These investigations begin with examining doctoral students’ experiences with teaching, the degree to which new assistant-level professors feel prepared to teach, and upon what factors they ground their perceived competence. If becoming a teacher and counselor educator is a developmental process, then what are the “critical incidents” that contribute to that process and why? How can these pivotal experiences be intentionally included in preparation programs? ACES can lead by

      i. purposefully examining how current doctoral programs are promoting doctoral student efficacy and skill in teaching and matching those findings to what is considered to be best practice as the field understands them right now.
ii. **identifying and supporting the different developmental needs** of doctoral students, adjunct instructors, assistant, associate and full professors as they grow and change in their role of “teacher.”

2. **Counselor educators in training need to be fluent in andragogical and developmental models of teaching and learning.** These theories drive classroom practices, program curricula and philosophies of teaching. However, these models and theories may be limited in their ability to facilitate learning for all counselor education students. ACES can lead by

   a. **determining the strengths and limitations of these models** and theories in working with diverse students including students form non-Western origins. Not only does the field need to know the strengths and limitations of these models but also **how well doctoral students are prepared in terms of understanding and applying these models.** Last, when these specific models and theories are used, what has been the experience of instructors and students who use them and their perceived degree of efficacy?

3. If we as counselor educators believe that counselors should utilize techniques and models grounded in theory and empirical design, then we should also expect doctoral students and even ourselves to ground our teaching practices in the same. Research suggests that doctoral students benefit from the following: a) exposure to a variety of instructional theories; b) exploration of multiple conceptual frameworks and their own value systems; c) discussions with faculty; d) feedback; e) identification of specific language to describe their actions as teachers, and f) opportunities to articulate their teaching philosophies. The implications for the field of counselor education and supervision is clear: a standalone class on instructional theory and pedagogy is essential to the development of competent and intentional counselor educators and supervisors. ACES can lead by

   a. **providing opportunities for doctoral students to develop, receive feedback and articulate their teaching philosophy** through mentoring experiences.
   
   b. offering professional development opportunities focusing on instructional theory.
   
   c. **investigating how doctoral students develop their instructional theories** and teaching philosophies and how those philosophies change over time.

4. Counselor educators are tasked with the preparation of graduate-level professionals who will serve the most vulnerable of client populations. Thus, counselor educators have ethical responsibilities to ensure their competence as instructors and supervisors. A one-size-fits-all approach to assessment of teaching effectiveness may be difficult yet there is a body of literature with remarkable consistency regarding tools for assessing teaching effectiveness. These include strategies for assessing teaching effectiveness are highlighted with attention to student evaluation of teaching (SET), peer observation of teaching (POT), instructor reflection, and direct evidence of student learning. ACES can lead by

   a. **Investigating the role of teaching evaluations in assessing teaching effectiveness** and the degree to which student evaluations accurately capture the unique needs of student learning in counselor education classrooms.
b. Determining, with the help of programs, if there is a connection between SET and POT with student success in fieldwork, or counselor educators’ use of feedback to improve their teaching over time.

c. Provide professional opportunities for counselor educators to learn more about different methods of assessing teaching effectiveness and provide funding and research support to investigate their degree of use.

5. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are a vital method of determining to what extent counselors-in-training are prepared. Optimal learning begins with the end in mind. That is, counselor educators should first determine what students should know or be able to do (knowledge, skills and dispositions) when learning is successful. ACES can lead by

a. Providing research avenues to determine how counselors’ knowledge, skills and dispositions connected to the care provided to clients, and the degree to which specific learning activities in counselor education related to the acquisition of counselor knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

b. Assisting preparation programs in determining their use of SLOs and determining what their impact is on student learning in counselor education programs.

6. While students’ learning is a central outcome of teaching learning process, there is no single greatest way to teach or a universally-accepted definition of teaching excellence. Excellent teaching practices are necessarily in sync with conceptions, or one’s beliefs, about teaching. Thus there is a relationship between the awareness of teaching beliefs and the enactment of teaching practices. Teaching excellence, like other competency-based practices in counselor education, requires a commitment from counselor educators to continuous professional improvement beyond teacher preparation in graduate programs or as new faculty members. ACES can lead by

a. Providing guidelines as to what ACES considers to be teaching excellence.

b. Creating opportunities for doctoral students and counselor educators engage in reflective practice specific on their teaching including professional development, mentoring and research venues.

c. Continuing to dedicate time, human resource and financial support for generating and disseminating research on teaching practices in counselor education.

d. Partnering with universities to increase their available professional development regarding teaching excellence and extend those resources to counselor education.

7. Syllabi are the primary method through which counselor educators set the tone for a course, state the purpose of the course, convey their expectations of students, present evaluation criteria, lay out the plan for the academic term, and communicate other relevant course information. Doctoral students should be fluent in syllabi construction including where to locate university policies, relating assignments to course goals, and enhancing student engagement. ACES can lead by
a. Providing professional development on syllabi construction at national conferences and or via webinars.

b. Determining the degree to which doctoral students are prepared to create meaningful, effective syllabi and the specific experiences in the preparation program that create that preparation.

c. Creating research opportunities to investigate how syllabi reflect considerations for diverse students, learning styles and learning communities in classrooms.

8. Counselor educators must ensure students develop both ability (skills) and willingness (dispositions) to uphold core professional values in keeping with fundamental ethical principles: autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, justice, fidelity, and veracity. Issues and concerns in counselor education programs regarding student conduct include: receptivity to feedback, basic counseling skills, boundaries, openness to self-examination, and advanced counseling skills. Problems of professional competence (PPC) was been cited as a prevalent concern in counselor preparation programs; specifically, emotion regulation, ethical behaviors, psychological unsuitability, and unprofessional behavior. Attention to effective counselor development, student support, remediation, and gatekeeping begins prior to admissions and continues until a student’s time in the program ends through graduation, withdrawal, or dismissal. Counselor education programs need formal, transparent, written policies and procedures that are implemented before students’ matriculation into a program. However, evidence indicates that remediation processes and criteria for evaluation are rarely clear. ACES can lead by

a. Developing and disseminating guidelines for remediation and student interventions to program including ACES’ views on personal counseling that can be flexible in meeting the needs of programs.

b. Investigating the need and professional perspectives on developing a consensus definition of PPC and standardized expectations for conduct throughout the profession.

9. There has been an increase in online educational learning venues in counselor education due to the provision of increased access, immediate delivery and decreased costs for potential students. The demonstration of require skills by counselors –in-training demonstrate can be difficult to demonstrate and assess. Counselor educators may not have the training required to create an effective online courses and may not be compensated for the time necessary to gain those skills. Not all on-line courses are “good fits” with all students in counseling preparation programs. ACES can lead by

a. Investigating the impact of online learning on master’s and doctoral students learning (eg. knowledge, skills and dispositions) in counselor education programs.

b. With the help of programs, determining similarities and differences learning outcomes between online and traditional counselor education programs.
c. Creating professional learning opportunities for doctoral students and counselor educators to develop online teaching skills.

10. The term “counseling program” may be used interchangeably with “curriculum,” a connection which makes sense insofar as the program is what content and skill sets are being taught and when the content or skill sets are being taught. The term “curriculum” typically refers to the content being taught in a school, university, course, or program. Counselor education programs traditionally have relied on developmental learning models, andragogical learning theories, and growth models in which to embed their curriculum. There are multiple facets to any counselor education program including number of programs that prepare counselors, the type of program, accreditation standards and licensure requirements, ethical codes, time to degree, financial considerations, faculty load and rotation, student mastery/learning outcome’s, and auxiliary resources. Program review and/or development can include several steps including the following: creation of a working team, definition of scope, preparation, collaboration and conversation, determining needed changes, generating options, crafting drafts, communicating changes, and plans to reassess the changes made. ACES can lead by

a. Investigating counselor education programs, including those who have won program innovation awards to determine how they integrate best teaching practices with overall programmatic considerations and how these practices are responsive to needs and interests of diverse students.

In conclusion, we feel strongly that ACES needs to renew its commitment to teaching in counselor education by investing the time, human resource and financial support in order to continue to support research and professional development opportunities in teaching. Specifically, we urge ACES to focus on the following:

1. Dedicate time, human resource and financial support for generating and disseminating research on teaching practices in counselor education, with specific attention to:

   a. Examining how counselor educators learn to teach. Specifically examining how current doctoral programs are providing opportunities to promote doctoral student efficacy and skill in teaching.

   b. Investigating counselor education programs, including those who have won program innovation awards to determine how they integrate best teaching practices with overall programmatic considerations and how these practices are responsive to needs and interests of diverse students.

   c. Creating research opportunities to investigate how syllabi reflect considerations for diverse students, learning styles and learning communities in classrooms.

   d. Investigating different methods of assessing teaching effectiveness and their degree of use.

   e. Assessing how counselors’ knowledge, skills and dispositions connected to the care provided to clients, and the degree to which specific learning activities in
counselor education related to the acquisition of counselor knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

f. Determining how counselors’ knowledge, skills and dispositions connected to the care provided to clients, and the degree to which specific learning activities in counselor education related to the acquisition of counselor knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

2. Provide opportunities for doctoral students to develop, receive feedback and articulate their teaching philosophy through mentoring experiences and offer professional development opportunities focusing on instructional theory.

3. Develop and disseminate guidelines for remediation and student interventions to programs that can be flexible in meeting the needs of programs.

4. Provide professional development opportunities on the following topics: different methods of assessing teaching effectiveness, syllabi construction, online teaching skills, and androgogical theories of learning.

In addition, we suggest ACES consider creating a body of professionals who can facilitate the inclusion of additional sections into the body of the report. If the Teaching Initiative Report is to be a living document, it will require more detail and information which the membership can provide. The teaching interest network or body like the taskforce could prompt the membership to develop additional sections and then vet those sections for future publication.

We have been honored to be tasked by ACES to investigate teaching best practices in our field. We have walked away with new ideas and a recommitment to teaching excellence in our classrooms. We hope that the ACES membership finds inspiration from our work. We thank the ACES governing council and the membership for their support and encouragement.

Respectfully submitted by the ACES Teaching Initiative Taskforce
October 1, 2016