

Philosophy on Teaching in Counseling Education

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I was called into counseling and counselor education by God in 2013. Initially I laughed at the thought and knew I wasn't qualified at that time. So, I decided to leave it in God's hands. In 2018, God said go! I was obedient and began to earn my master's in clinical mental health counseling and after completion immediately started my Ph.D. journey in counseling education and supervision. What I have found through my counseling experience is that it is important to have counselor educators passionate about educating others and continuing to strengthen the profession. I have always valued sharing what I have learned over the years with others. This belief comes from wanting others to grow, thrive and prosper just as I have and even more. I believe this even more now that I am a leader and advocate for the counseling profession. Hoarding information or experience does not make you more secure or important. Educating rising counselors to be as strong or stronger than you, builds strong counselors and a stronger profession. When focusing on leadership and advocacy within the profession, it is important to remember that this profession is still building credibility. Our world faces so much social and political turmoil today and an increase in counselors is needed, thus an increase in educators excited about paving the way for the new counselors is also required.

I have traveled over most of the US and many places in Europe and been exposed to diverse cultures, values and belief systems. These experiences and exposure have broadened my understanding of society, relationships which has influenced the way I approach teaching, leadership, and counseling. I believe I was blessed with these experiences to equip me for this stage in my professional journey. This experience will assist me in effectively facilitating the transformation of future counselors by acknowledging their experiences and environments instead of negating or ignoring them.

Teaching Methods

My pedagogical style is Transformative (Mezirow, 1978). I like the concept of acting as a catalyst using in-depth analysis to allow students to possibly change their frames of reference. I also agree with students being responsible for their learning and having to challenge their current beliefs through education (Haddock and Whitman, 2019). To help students accomplish these goals, I meet them where they are socially and culturally; I want them to engage in conversations about how their experiences can be integrated into their training as counselors. I enjoy hearing about the student's experience and then facilitating how that experience can be used to work through their current opportunities or situations. While I may know what's best for the student in some cases, that will not be true in others. As such, I will prompt the student to focus on what can be done to utilize their individual situations to learn. By using the student's personal experiences, I empower them to be themselves in totality and use self-reflection to determine how they grow and change their frames of reference. My responsibility as a counselor educator is to encourage students to create a learning environment and constantly challenge their frames of reference as well as others.

Assessment

Assessments are vital in teaching. Establishing course expectations and goals provides the student with an understanding of course deliverables and learning outcomes. Quizzes, exams, discussion boards, role play activities, and recording review exercises can provide evidence of whether the students are comprehending the material and able to synergize the information. As a result, if students are having problems comprehending the information quizzes and exams are the indicator for me as the teacher that I need to intervene and see how to assist them with learning. Surveys and end-of-course reflections enable the teacher to understand whether the student had difficulties in the course, what they like about the course, and what they feel needs to be changed. As important as assessing the student's progress is, I believe it is equally important to assess myself as a teacher. The only way to make sure I am successfully creating and maintaining conducive learning environments and ensuring I am effectively facilitating student-focused learning is to self-assess (Ross, 2007).

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