

Teaching Philosophy

I teach so that students will experience personal growth in their own lives and develop into skilled counselors who will successfully assist others in their pursuit of wellness. I accomplish this through developing their critical thinking skills by combining experiential learning activities with didactic teaching and Socratic questioning with opportunities to engage in social justice. My teaching philosophy divides into three categories: knowledge of the literature, personal growth and insight, and exploring advocacy and social justice.

1. Knowledge base

To provide the strong empirical base that counselors need to exhibit upon graduation, I emphasize acquisition of empirical knowledge, traditional theories and current thought for each course. In addition to lecturing, group work, and activities, I pair end products such as reflection papers, case studies, a research paper or other applied product that counselors-in-training can use to demonstrate what they have learned.

For example, as a teaching assistant in a masters level research methods class, students were required to prepare a research proposal for their final end product. For many students, this project is one that is fraught with anxiety, as they may have had minimal prior research experience. The project is scaffolded throughout the course to assist in building skills and confidence. Students select a topic to explore, create a research question to answer, complete a thorough literature review, select a methodology, and write a research proposal. This end product can also be used as the proposal draft for a master's thesis. Scaffolding the material into weekly writing assignments, while receiving and giving peer feedback, assists in providing

the support and structure for the final product. Weekly knowledge quizzes, and several article critiques round out the products due for class. A final cumulative exam assists in evaluating that students have the research knowledge to meet program and accreditation standards.

2. Personal Growth and Insight

Counselors-in-training learn to separate their own emotions, thoughts, and feelings from those of their clients, by gaining insight into themselves. I use a developmental approach to learning as well as a variety of inventories to help students learn about themselves and to critically gauge both the strengths and weaknesses of such inventories: (e.g., 16 personalities (Myers-Briggs Type Inventory) (www.16personalities.com); the Cultural Competency Self-Assessment Questionnaire—Service Provider Version (www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mason.pdf).

Anxiety is a common element for many graduate students, and I work to assist them in decreasing their anxiety by applying a coaching stance so that students learn to be patient with themselves and to trust the process of their education. During each class, I look for opportunities to capitalize on student questions and interest areas to assist them in making meaning of what they are learning. For example, when teaching on multiculturalism, equity and advocacy, I focus on each individual's progress in developing cultural humility rather than measuring them against some criterion.

3. Multiculturalism and Social Justice in Counseling

If scholarship, teaching and service do not impact the lives of the people we are preparing counselors to help, then we are contributing to the problem. Our goal needs to be to

assist each student, each faculty member and ultimately each client to reach their maximum state of wellness. All students need to have equity in opportunities to learn, engage, and synthesize their experiences to form their own counseling philosophy. I infuse multiculturalism and social justice into each of my classes: using current events as discussion topics to highlight the disparate treatment of members of marginalized communities, using case examples that encourage students to interact with and design treatment programs that address the effects of disparate treatment. In addition, I provide support to encourage students to consider the lived experiences of individuals who may not have the power and privilege that they do. I also highlight activities in the local community to raise awareness of how students can advocate for community needs. In addition, I make time to mentor students who are interested in engaging more deeply into the topics that we discuss in class.

I prepare questions for students to consider in their research topics. Are the research questions considering the day-to-day realities that individuals from marginalized populations experience? Are the research methods in the literature promoting ethical research activity among diverse populations? As members of the counseling profession, how will counselors-in-training advocate for the profession in a way that promotes social justice?

Lastly, I infuse my own research interest and include information about people who are deaf and hard of hearing in each of my classes. Perceived as a disability group by members of the majority culture, though a unique linguistic cultural group by those within Deaf culture, very few instructors are familiar with the needs of this population and how to work effectively through professional sign language interpreters. Having a background in working with people

who are deaf and hard of hearing, I endeavor to plant seeds of interest that will increase my student's awareness of the needs and resources of this vital population.