

## **Pre-Intensive Teaching Competencies Synthesis**

Gregory C. Wright, LCPC, NCC

Department of Counselor Education & Family Studies, Liberty University

### **Author Note**

Gregory Cecil Wright

I have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Gregory Cecil Wright.

Email: [gcwright@liberty.edu](mailto:gcwright@liberty.edu)

**Abstract**

This paper is written to assess my understanding of the Haddock & Whitman and Vela texts. This synthesis of information addresses and consists of specifically addressed CACREP doctoral standards. These standards pertain to the following information in the education of counselors: roles and responsibilities; pedagogy and teaching methods; models of adult developing and learning; instructional and curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation; effective approaches for online instruction; screening, remediation, and gatekeeping functions; learning assessments; ethical and culturally relevant strategies; and the role of mentoring. The overall purpose of this paper is to have a broader understanding of CACREP teaching competencies and how these competencies are effective in the education of counselors.

*Keywords:* counselor responsibilities, teaching methods, online instruction, gatekeeping, learning assessments, ethics

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

There are roles and responsibilities associated with educating counselors that are very important. Some of the following are the roles associated with the education of counselors: teacher, ethical evaluator, gatekeeper, and mentor. Haddock & Whitman (2019) spoke about the counselor educator's important role as a teacher; something that is not congruent with or the same as being a counselor. It is important that the counselor educator is an effective teacher, ethical, uses best practices, can mentor, monitor, and guide the student, in order that the student will become an effective counselor in the community.

One of the most important responsibilities is to be a gatekeeper; affirming the student while also holding the student accountable to using and implementing best practices, working in the best interest of future clients, understanding laws and regulations, and helping the student, where the student needs to improve (H, 7). Gatekeeping can best be achieved and practiced via the art of teaching (V, 159).

Another responsibility is the ability to understand how to effectively design and teach curriculum. With educating counselors, it is necessary to understand the various ways to teach the adult learner and to be able to use language that incites higher learning; an example being the use of Bloom's Taxonomy. Having a philosophy of education that is inclusive and ethical is also important in educating counselors. The goal should be for everyone to feel safe and validated (V, 136).

Overall, creating an educational environment that supports, engages, and encourages successful outcomes is a great responsibility associated with educating counselors. The idea is to make sure that the students are knowledgeable, possess clinical skills, and are ethical in their behavior and how they relate to others (V, 160).

### **Pedagogy & Teaching Methods**

Pedagogy is a term that pertains to the study of teaching, is teacher-focused, and focuses on the relaying of information to the student (H, 16). It has been mostly attributed in the education of children. In this type of instruction, the teacher is viewed as the authority figure on the subject and assumes all responsibility for the learning experience (H, 16). However, due to the change in today's climate, the importance of how the individual learns has become important (V, 26). Andragogy refers to helping adults learn, promotes cognitive complexity, promotes self-directed learning, and uses multiple strategies to measure student learning outcomes (SLOs) (H, 17;102).

The following theories of teaching and learning are important in counselor education. They are as follows: Constructivism, Critical Pedagogy, and Transformative Learning Theory. Constructivism supports the notion that learners take an active role in learning based upon their experiences (H, 18). The student uses his/her own skills in the learning process, and the instructor acts as a co-creator and assists the student in making the connection between his/her experiences and in exploring possible lessons to learn (H, 19).

Critical Pedagogy focuses on concepts such as oppression and justice with hopes of establishing an awareness that produces healing, self-actualization, and empowerment (social change) (H, 19, 20). The teacher learns along with the student and encourages the student to find his/her voice. Transformative Learning Theory supports the notion that learning happens through critical reflection, supports student autonomy, and endorses a learner-centered approach (H, 19, 21).

These theories are important in understanding the counselor educator's philosophy of teaching and how the teacher will engage, interact, and use various, evidenced-based

assessments to measure student learning and growth, while using best practices and upholding CACREP standards, as well as the program's and university's standards.

### **Models of Adult Developing & Learning**

It is essential to recognize that, as counselor educators, the teaching methods we use are a direct result of the teaching philosophy we support (H, 102). Andragogy is the methodology of helping adults learn (H, 102). Teacher-centered and student-centered teaching are two ways or models of adult developing and learning. Teacher-centered teaching can be effective in relaying new information or a new skill; however, it facilitates passive learning and does not foster student autonomy; making it hard for some students to engage (H, 102). On the other hand, student-centered learning encourages student autonomy and ownership, as well as critical thinking (H, 102).

It is important that the counselor educator can understand that adult learners are affected by culture, have different skill sets, have different life and employment experiences, and have different learning styles (H, 103). Four assumptions, developed by Knowles, can be attributed to adult learners, and they are as follows: self-directed due to maturity; importance of experience, which is the foundation for everything that is presented; desire to learn, in order to effectively complete things; and focus on what can happen "now" rather than future progress (H, 103). David Kolb discussed about the following four learning styles of adult learners: converger (learns via practicality); diverger (learns via observation); assimilator (learns via logical theories); and accommodator (learns via hands-on) (H, 103).

It is important that the counselor educator uses different methods of engaging adult learners and can meet the needs of each adult learner. Experiential learning can be beneficial for adult learners and can also support cultural competence (H, 104). Another thing that can be

useful is the interactive lecture (V, 52). A good balance of teacher-centered and student-centered teaching can be effective by presenting the information but allowing the adult learner to be actively involved and keep autonomy.

### **Instructional & Curriculum Design**

Instructional and curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation methods are important aspects to consider, as they relate to counselor education. As it relates to instructional and curriculum design, it is important that the main goal is considered and that everything that is done relates to the product of that goal and its outcome, which the student should be able to produce at the end of that class.

The backward design is supported by evidence, which supports its value (V, 2). It consists of the following three stages: recognizing learning outcomes, recognizing acceptable evidence, and aligning learning experiences and outcomes (V, 3). It is important that learning objectives are approached with the end goal in mind at the beginning of the process (H, 122). Student learning outcomes (SLOs) should be created and developed to show the student's level of learning, and the use of Bloom's Taxonomy, as well as Fink's taxonomy, can be beneficial in describing the level of learning that is expected of the student (H, 122; V, 6). These SLOs should be reflective and indicative of CACREP accreditation standards, as well as the standards of the program and of the university (V, 5).

An important element to consider is that the curriculum should not be outdated but should include material that is research-based, effective, and relevant (H, 123). Supplemental articles, media, and even websites can be effective along with or even without the textbook, in order to move from being instructor-focused to the emphasis on student learning (H, 124). It is important that every student, even those with disabilities, can access the learning material. While the

internet has proven to be an asset in online learning, the material for the class must still be evidence-based, and internet-based resources must be examined regularly (H, 125).

### **Effective Approaches for Online Instruction**

Online instruction has given adult learners the opportunity to maintain their responsibilities, while, at the same time, furthering their educational aspirations (H, 86). While it can be effective, it has been documented that some students might struggle with motivation, time management, and isolation, as well as feeling unsupported (H, 87). Effective approaches for online instruction do exist and can be implemented by the counselor educator.

It has been noted that creating and encouraging the community of inquiry can be beneficial for online instruction (V, 84). They consist of the following three elements: teaching presence, social presence, and cognitive presence. The teaching presence refers to using active lecturing and retrieval practice, which are research-based teaching strategies (V, 84). Social presence refers to how the counselor educator interacts and presents himself/herself online with the students, and cognitive presence refers to how the students can engage and activate prior learning and employ critical thinking (V, 84).

Promoting autonomy can be effective in encouraging motivation. This can be done by the counselor educator connecting with students via the use of a video introduction and by the counselor educator encouraging student interaction and engagement via the use of a discussion board or even a narrated PowerPoint (H, 87; V, 85). The counselor educator can also learn the students' careers and backgrounds and can use that information to get the students to actively engage by presenting things that are of interest (H, 87). Another effective approach to online instruction is to use different ways to communicate with students and to encourage different ways to communicate and interact amongst the student learners (H, 86).

A warm environment, where each student feels safe, validated, and respected, will create an atmosphere that can enhance and make the online learning experience even more fulfilling for everyone involved.

### **Screening, Remediation, & Gatekeeping**

Screening, remediation, and gatekeeping are so important, as they pertain to teaching. Gatekeeping is an expected role of counselor educators and is viewed as an essential element in counselor education (H, 173). This entails making sure that only competent students graduate from the masters-level program and become counselors (V, 158). It also entails evaluating and monitoring the student's abilities as it relates to professional standards, and if something needs to be addressed and improved concerning that individual's performance, behavior, or attitude, it is the counselor educator's ethical responsibility to address and monitor that individual's progress (H, 173; V, 159). Another important element of gatekeeping pertains to assessing competency via the following: knowledge, personal behavior, clinical skill set, and professional presentation (V, 160).

Specific screening tools are used in the admissions process, in order to decipher who is an overall, good fit for the counseling program and to prevent individuals, who are lacking in specific areas or qualifications, from becoming a part of the counseling field (H, 173). This is especially important in preventing potential clients from being hurt by potential counselors, who might not use best practices or might be mentally or emotionally fit to counsel others.

Remediation is important in assisting the student to improve in an area that has been identified as a problem source for the individual. In order to assist the student in a specific area, the student is placed on a remediation plan, which is designed to help improve his/her skillset and performance and to become successful (V, 163). Everything must be well-documented

(assessments and outcomes), and the plan must be exact, well-written, and align with program requirements (H, 175). Confidentiality must also be adhered. This is discussed in the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) and in the 2016 CACREP standards (H, 53).

### **Assessment of Learning**

The assessment of learning is something that is crucial in educating counselors and in the learning process (H, 146). Assessing the student's work and progress is necessary on so many levels. First, it helps to gauge student comprehension (V, 115). This can be done via both formative assessments ("assessment *for* learning"), which are ongoing and include feedback, and summative assessments ("assessment *of* learning"), which are the student's overall evaluation at the end of the course (H, 147).

The student's comprehension of the material is something that is paramount. While learning was once viewed as cognitive based, it is now viewed as multidimensional, which includes the student's entire being, as well as the things that can affect that individual, like culture (H, 83). This is something that is important to understand, especially with adult learners and how they are taught and are assessed for learning.

Next, assessing the student's learning and progress helps to recognize any issue with the counselor educator's teaching (or teaching style) and correct it (V, 116). Student feedback is useful in this manner, in order to assess the student's understanding about what they learned and how they learned it. An effective rubric can be used for such feedback and can foster self-reflection and improvement (V, 133). This allows the opportunity for the counselor educator to reflect and make necessary changes, in order to help the student to grasp the information.

The assessment of learning can be fostered by creating an environment that promotes active engagement and that focuses on learning using formative and strengths-based assessments.

Due to changes that are taking place concerning learning, evidenced-based practices and outcome-based performance data are important for institutional accrediting bodies (H, 147). The main goal is to effectively assess learning using various, effective methods.

### **Ethical & Culturally Relevant Strategies**

There are ethical and culturally relevant strategies, which are used in counselor preparation, that are beneficial. A counselor educator is expected to exhibit multicultural competence when dealing and working with the counselee; something that is discussed frequently in the ACA Code of Ethics (2014), as well as in the 2016 CACREP accreditation standards (H, 50). As the counselor exhibits multicultural competence in the interactions with others in the program, the student can learn how to become more culturally sensitive and culturally aware. It is the counselor educator's role to teach, demonstrate, and model multicultural competence.

The student's culture can affect his/her experience in the program. It has been noted that culturally diverse students might sometimes deal with some of the following things: isolation, exclusion, and even tokenization (H, 51). Some might even feel misunderstood, disrespected, and even unsupported. The counselor educator should intentionally support and encourage multicultural diversity in the program and should integrate multicultural aspects into the class and classwork. The idea is to equip the student with the tools to be able to respect and work with potential clients of different ethnicities and cultures (H, 51). It would be ethically irresponsible, as a counselor educator, to not educate, deal with, and present multicultural diversity in the classroom. Something that must also be kept in mind pertains to recognizing and teaching people with noted disabilities. Providing appropriate accommodations must be implemented, per the university's procedures.

Assessments could be used to assist in measuring if the students are learning about multicultural competence. Active learning could be used to measure awareness, and the students can show or demonstrate their understanding of multicultural competence by producing work that is indicative of understanding (V, 35).

### **The Role of Mentoring in Counselor Education**

The role of mentoring in counselor education is crucial. First, mentoring can be effective and positive in assisting students. On one hand, it can be beneficial for those, who are either struggling in the program or who are dealing with behavioral issues (V, 163). On the other hand, mentoring can result in improved learning and self-efficacy, as well as professional competence (H, 214).

Mentoring done by peers and faculty can be effective and beneficial in educating counselors (H, 42). It can help to create an environment and relationship that can promote inclusion, support, and guidance, as well as feedback (H, 214). Next, mentoring can assist the student or mentee in making the best decisions career-wise and can help the student become more confident socially. It has been suggested that mentoring can be effective in producing future and skillful leaders in the community; however, this is something that must be explored more in depth (H, 215).

According to the Haddock and Whitman text, the following five strategies can be effective in mentoring: sponsoring advancement for the mentee; coaching to socialize and to encourage a sense of community; safeguarding from adversity; testing their skill set; and recommending the mentee for more complex positions (H, 216-222). Safeguarding from adversity is something that is the most important of the strategies because it deals with how to

prevent, intervene, and reflect when dealing with stressful situations (H, 218). Therefore, mentoring can be an effective tool for personal growth, as well as for remediation (V, 164).

Overall, the role mentoring must not be taken lightly because the outcomes of this relationship can be beneficial for both the mentor and the mentee. Boundaries must be respected, and the relationship must remain professional and ethical in nature.

### **Conclusion**

The synthesis of information addressed in this paper addressed CACREP standards. As a counselor educator, it is important to understand all the tenets pertaining to roles and responsibilities; pedagogy and teaching methods; models of adult developing and learning; instructional and curriculum design, delivery, and evaluation; effective approaches for online instruction; screening, remediation, and gatekeeping functions; learning assessments; ethical and culturally relevant strategies; and the role of mentoring. This paper has been an enlightening experience.

### References

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**Benchmark Teaching Competencies Synthesis Grading Rubric |  
COUC747\_390\_202340**

Criteria	Ratings				Points
Synthesis of material	90 to >82 pts Advanced Shows advanced levels of evidence of comprehending course content and applicability to practice as a counselor educator.	82 to >75 pts Proficient Shows proficient evidence of comprehension of course content and applicability to practice as a counselor educator.	75 to >0 pts Developing Shows developing and little evidence of comprehension of course content and applicability to practice as a counselor educator.	0 pts Not Present	90 pts 85
Quantity & Timeliness	50 to >45 pts Advanced Succinct summaries remain within the 250-300 word count requirement, and points are cited in the truncated format provided.	45 to >41 pts Proficient Succinct summaries remain within the 250-300 word count requirement, and most points are cited in the truncated format provided.	41 to >0 pts Developing Summaries are either not within the 250-300 word count requirement, and/or points are cited in the truncated format provided.	0 pts Not Present	50 pts 50
Mechanics & Composition	30 to >27 pts Advanced Paper is free of errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Writing style displays exceptional composition with all of the following elements:	27 to >24 pts Proficient Few errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Clear writing style displaying basic composition with most of the following elements:	24 to >0 pts Developing Pervasive errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Writing includes pervasive errors in multiple categories:	0 pts Not Present	30 pts 30
Criteria	Ratings				Points
APA	30 to >27 pts Advanced Citations are appropriately implemented and are formatted per APA (truncated format allowed). All of the references are strong, legitimate academic sources and are correctly formatted per APA.	27 to >24 pts Proficient Minor errors regarding appropriate implementation and/or APA formatting of citations. Most references are from legitimate academic sources; few formatting errors according to APA.	24 to >0 pts Developing Pervasive errors regarding appropriate implementation and/or APA formatting of citations. Multiple references are from questionable sources; multiple formatting errors according to APA.	0 pts Not Present	30 pts 30
Total Points: 200					