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# Philosophy of Teaching

The word “philosophy” originates from the Greek word “philosophia”, which when literally translated, means a "love of wisdom”. I believe this is a perfect word to describe the way that I feel about learning. My hope is that through my guidance, the students will begin to feel this way as well. This document serves to describe my professional and personal beliefs related to my academic instruction in counselor education and supervision.

First, coming from a constructivist-developmental approach I will outline how I utilize the nine principles described by Jane Vella (McAuliffe & Ericksen, 2011).

* Creating a feeling of safety- From the first contact, my goal is to create a safe environment by affirming and accepting responses to participants who share as well as personal self-disclosure. The participants also have input in creating expectations for group discussions so that no one is left feeling their input was not valuable. Goals and objectives are stated in the beginning, but I also seek from participants what their personal goals are for the training.
* Ensure the existence of sound relationships- In self-disclosure, my hope is that participants will feel that I am genuine and open to getting to know them. I reiterate that I am available during and after trainings by phone or email. In describing activities I am clear to address the rationale for them.
* Show respect for learners as agents- In trainings, I ask participants to share what areas they most want to focus on and have questions about in order to enable them to take the lead in how we spend our time. I am open to feedback from participants regarding topics discussed.
* Engage learners- I respect and understand that participants do not want to hear someone lecture for the length of the trainings and regurgitate information. I utilize both large and small group discussions and include videos and activities where and when I can.
* Do regular needs assessments and practice accountability- Although this is addressed above, hearing from participants regarding their interest in the specific topics is important to me. Participants are offered anonymous evaluation forms to complete.
* Provide sequence and reinforcement- It is important to be intentional in the order in which information is addressed in a training. I feel that general concepts should be addressed initially followed by more specific concepts and how they tie together within the subject matter as well as what we do with those concepts.
* Provide opportunities for immediate application- It is important that my discussions and activities address how concepts can be utilized and build practical skill.
* Practice equity- First, I do prefer that participants address me by my first name and introduce myself in such a way. I also prefer seating in a circular fashion, whether around a single table or arranging desks in a circle if possible. As I have stated previously, I self-disclose and open up the space for others’ ideas and knowledge rather than solely focus on what I can provide.
* Encourage teamwork- In activities and discussions I will frequently pair or group up participants to work on the activity before a larger group discussion.

Values

I believe the participants come to trainings with individual and diverse experiences, beliefs, and goals that impact their relationships with the instructor (myself), fellow participants, and their clients. Their individual difference also impact the direction of discussions and therefore what the participants take away with them. This is why engaging the participants is so important for me. I expect that participants will come to trainings prepared to engage and with open minds. I both demonstrate and expect ethical behavior, authenticity, and accountability with my participants.

Continuing education should bring about a sense of inquiry and excitement. I believe it is my duty to assure an environment of fundamental mutuality. My hope is to be a model of continuous education and improvement of my skill and knowledge base so that I can credibly and accurately instruct participants.

I strive to improve my counseling, supervision, and instructional skills. I engage in active self-reflection and seek the feedback of participants and trusted peers.

As stated above, instruction relies on an accurate assessment of participants’ prior knowledge, capabilities and expectations. Learning objectives and outcomes are created to reflect ethical principles, professional, and accreditation standards, state licensure guidelines and real world practice. These are delivered through diverse learning experiences/methods.

In conclusion, my teaching philosophy reflects my value of education. Counselors and counselors in training serve a vital function in our society and I am feel that it is my duty and obligation to empower them be successful by utilizing the tools they are given and the skills they already possess.

McAuliffe, G. & Eriksen, K. (Eds.). (2011). *Handbook of Counselor Preparation: Constructivist, Developmental, and Experimental Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.