

Philosophy-Based Teaching

Fostering a learning environment where the valuable information shared by the counselor educator is relevant and impactful to the adult learner's educational journey is possible in any learning environment (Haddock & Whitman, 2019). Adult learners who are striving for academic success are returning to traditional, hybrid, and online educational settings from diverse environments with a variety of learned lived knowledge that is a major factor in their educational journey (Zorn-Arnold & Conaway, 2017; Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014). This discussion will explain how I would instruct the teaching topic, "counselor professional identity", from my developing teaching philosophy of Constructivist Theory.

Students who have been admitted into a counseling program experience a variety of learning experiences that unlike other disciplines will challenge them personally and academically (Remley & Herlihy, 2020). In teaching on the topic of counselor professional identity, I would convey this message along with expressing that their professional interests and identity will develop over time (Cureton et al., 2019). There are 3 main lessons that I would have students complete along with other reflective writings, readings, and discussions. My first lesson would be an icebreaker game called "Who's in the Room" to gain an understanding of the diversity in class and an awareness of their background (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014). In a traditional class setting, I would provide the class with a handout with a list of questions that they would ask a fellow peer. Teaching from the Constructivist model, this activity supports engaging the class in a student-led activity where they would decide if they would work in pairs, groups, or another method of their choice (Haddock & Whitman, 2019; Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014). Allowing the students to democratically choose their own method of fact-finding allows the student to problem-solve utilizing their own skills, learn from their peers, and become

invested partners in their education. This game could also be utilized within an online course. Online learners rely on what is written to complete assignments and engage in learning; therefore, I would take a more direct approach in strategically writing out the directions for engagement to maximize awareness of their peers, understanding why the assignment is important, and the learning experience (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014).

The second strategy that I would utilize to instruct the topic would be by guiding the class in developing their Professional Identity Plan. This assignment was beneficial when I completed my own plan because it allowed me to intentionally analyze and map my professional journey. I was able to take the dreams, ideas, goals, and plans that were in my head or written in journals and write them in a structured professional plan. I would like to give my students the same experience. This assignment supports my Constructivist views because it will allow the student to see that there is no absolute pathway to becoming a counselor educator and that their life experiences are intricate to their development (Haddock & Whitman, 2019).

The third lesson I would engage the students to teach counselor professional identity would be to assign them to complete an interview with a counselor educator or counselor. This activity would be designed to enhance their understanding of the roles of a counselor educator or counselor, create a networking experience, and possibly create an opportunity for mentorship (Remley & Herlihy, 2020). As the instructor, I would be providing an environment that is conducive to growth and development as a counselor educator, and the assignment could be completed within an online or face-to-face platform (Haddock & Whitman, 2019). The adjustments would depend upon whether the students are at a Master's or Doctoral level of learning. If the students are at a Master's level, they would be required to interview a counselor. If the students are Doctoral level, they would be required to interview a counselor educator.

Laura Haddock (2019) stated, “one common thread in excellent teaching was a fully developed, confident professional identity that was transparently shared with students”. The final teaching strategy I would employ to teach the lesson would be taught through transparency and allowing the students to know that I am invested in their success (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2014). Throughout my educational career, I have been blessed to have some amazing and supportive professors that were invested in my success. They created learning environments that encouraged me to explore, provided constructive feedback to help me improve, and were available to discuss issues. I will model the same non-academic lessons to my students that are instrumental in the development of the counselor’s professional identity.

References

- Cureton, J. L., Davis, H., & Giegerich, V. (2019). Counselor professional identity development: Narratives from a professional event. *The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision, 12*(1).
- Haddock, L., & Whitman, J. (2019). *Preparing the educator in counselor education*. Routledge.
- Remley, T. P., Jr., & Herlihy, B. (2020). *Ethical, legal, and professional issues in counseling* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Svinicki, M. D., & McKeachie, W. J. (2014). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teacher* (14th ed.). Independence, KY: Cengage Learning.
- Zorn-Arnold, B., & Conaway, W. (2017). The keys to online learning for adults: The six principles of andragogy, part III. *Distance Learning, 13*(2), 1–5.