The Journal of the Pennsylvania Counseling Association

Terence Yee, Editor

The Journal of the Pennsylvania Counseling Association (JPCA) is a professional, refereed journal dedicated to the study and development of the counseling profession. The JPCA publishes articles that address the interest, theory, scientific research, and innovative programs and practices of counselors.

Manuscript: See inside Back Cover for Guidelines for Authors and email for manuscript submission. Manuscripts are welcomed from students, practitioners, and educators in the field of counseling.

Advertising: For information, contact Richard Joseph Behun. Advertising will be accepted for its value, interest, or professional application for PCA members. The publication of any advertisement by PCA is an endorsement neither of the advertiser nor of the products or services advertised. PCA is not responsible for any claims made in an advertisement. Advertisers may not, without prior consent, incorporate in a subsequent advertisement the fact that a product or service has been advertised in a PCA publication.

Subscriptions: Membership in the Pennsylvania Counseling Association, Inc. includes a subscription to the *Journal.*

Permission: Permission must be requested in writing from the Editor for reproducing more than 500 words of the *Journal* material.

Cover Design and Graphics: Kurt L. Kraus, Assistant Professor, Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA. Special thanks to Johanna Jones for the typeset.

The Journal of the Pennsylvania Counseling Association (ISSN 1523-987X) is a biannual publication for professional counselors. It is an official, refereed branch journal of the American Counseling Association, Inc.

The Journal of the

Pennsylvania Counseling Association

Earn CE credit now for reading *JPCA* articles.
See test page 34

Alternative Assessment Practices in Counselor Education Programs: A Suggested Framework

Monir F. Morgan

This article presents a theoretical framework for using alternative assessment practices in counselor education programs that focus on promoting student counselors' life-long learning. This proposed framework aims to help counselor educators to understand and promote better planning, design, and implementation of alternative assessment practices at the student, course, and/or program level. In light of published scholarship, the author also presents many examples of alternative assessment practices that can be used by counselor educators.

Keywords: formative assessment, summative assessment, alternative assessment, assessment of learning, assessment for learning

Classroom assessment in counselor education programs means much more than assessing student counselors' learning and assigning grades. Assessment is as important as teaching in enhancing student learning (Boud & Falchikov, 2007). Classroom assessment is defined as a systematic process used to collect information to make inferences about students' characteristics, achievement, and progress (Reynolds, Livingstone, & Wilson, 2009). Classroom assessments have been used for many purposes such as appraising students' knowledge, understanding, abilities, or skills (Marriot & Lau, 2008). In addition, they have been utilized to enhance students' effort, engagement, learning, and performance (Hammerman, 2009). Moreover, classroom assessments have been used to encourage students to learn accountability in their work and in their personal lives (Wormeli, 2006). Therefore, many accreditation bodies, including the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), have shifted toward the output or outcomes-oriented standards model. This requires schools and counseling programs to develop evaluation systems to determine whether graduates are adequately demonstrating knowledge practical skills and competencies. The following section sheds some light on the current assessment practices in counselor education programs.

Current Assessment Practices in Counselor Education Programs

The focus on learning outcomes or competency-based standards in higher education resulted in a corresponding shift in counselor education programs assessment. Urofsky (2010) argued that as part of this shift, state, regional, and program-specific accrediting agencies have been moving from input-based processes to outcome-based processes in which assessment focuses on knowledge and skill development. In addition, accrediting bodies for specialized programs have expectations requiring programs to meet quality standards and policies aimed at assessing student learning outcomes (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2012). Assessment of student learning outcomes in counselor education programs has evolved consistent with the higher education movement as reflected in the CACREP 2009 and reemphasized in CACREP 2016 standards with a new terminology 'Key Performance Indicators' (KPIs). Currently, counselor education programs that

Monir F. Morgan, Department of Psychology and Counseling, Alvernia University. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Monir F. Morgan, Department of Psychology and Counseling, Alvernia University, 540 Upland Avenue, Reading, PA 19611 (e-mail: monir.morgan@alvernia.edu).

seek accreditation through CACREP are required to demonstrate KPIs of student learning in each of the eight core areas and in each student's respective specialty area(s) for doctoral programs (CACREP, 2016, p. 18). While assessment of programs is seen as an institutional requirement or accreditation requirement, Ewell, Paulson, and Kinzie (2011, as cited in Barrio Minton & Gibson, 2012) found student learning outcomes assessments were also being conducted at the program level to improve instruction and programs. As a result of using outcome-based standards, counselor education programs have been able to assess students' cognitive and affective growth as a result of their educational experience (Warden & Benshoff, 2012). With the lack of a defined process for using KPIs, many counselor education programs utilize the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE). This is confirmed by Haberstroh, Duffey, Marble, and Ivers (2014) who pointed out that more than 300 counselor education programs utilize CPCE, which is a multiple-choice, national exam that consists of 160 items with 20 items per eight core CACREP curricular areas (Center for Credentialing and Education, 2014). It measures the content knowledge of students as they near the end of their counseling programs and assesses their retention and recall of theoretical and conceptual material. In spite of its value in measuring student counselors' knowledge, the CPCE focuses on assessing student counselors' ability to recall what they have learned and memorized. According to Haberstroh, Duffey, Marble, and Ivers (2014), the CPCE does not focus on specific counseling specialties or practical skills and they concluded that counselor education programs might need to implement other means to evaluate the specific learning objectives required by specialty.

There are some reasons why many counselor educators are currently using CPCE. The first reason is the belief that assessment is for certification (Norton, Norton, & Shannon, 2013). The second is the belief that assessment is for accreditation (Deneen & Boud, 2014). The third is the lack of awareness and limited familiarity with the criteria of assessment for learning or learning-oriented assessment (Hernández, 2012). The last reason is the belief that assessment is an infringement on academic freedom (Cain & Hutchings, 2015).

It is clear that the focus of many counselor educators is more on the assessment of learning by using traditional assessment practices (TAPs) such as multiple-choice questions that usually focus on memorization and assessing lower-level thinking and do not enable students to demonstrate their KPIs or measure their learning and effort over the entire course or program. Therefore, there is a need to shift to assessment for learning by using alternative assessment practices (AAPs) to enhance student counselors' life-long learning. The following section will provide a brief comparison between TAPs and AAPs.

Traditional Assessment versus Alternative Assessment

Traditional assessment, also identified as assessment of learning and/or summative assessment, is deeply rooted in education. The findings of many studies indicated that the primary method of assessment in higher education is testing through TAPs (e.g., Cheng & Fox, 2017; Halinen, Ruohoniemi, Katajavuori, & Virtanen, 2014).

This entails teachers use of TAPs such as multiple-choice exams, quizzes, selection exams (i.e., true-false, matching), written response exams (e.g., fill in the blanks, short paragraph), and essay exams. These TAPs are usually used as summative assessments and are given periodically to determine what students know, and what they do not know.

Although TAPs that focus on assessing students' learning provide some useful general information for outside audiences, literature on assessment and evaluation indicates that many higher education teachers, including psychology and counseling instructors, are concerned that the current TAPs are not always linked to student learning (e.g., Carless, 2014; Webber, 2012). Furthermore, the findings of many studies on assessment confirmed that using TAPs result in many problems and challenges such as they (a) only assess lower-level thinking (Hickson, Reed, & Sander, 2012); (b) promote memorization and regurgitation and distort learning (Halinen, Ruohoniemi, Katajavuori, & Virtanen, 2014); (c) are not effective in measuring student learning and effort over the entire course (Carless, 2015); and (d) neglect

problem-solving and critical thinking skills (Carless, Joughin, & Lui, 2006). Moreover, students have indicated that TAPs are (a) unable to assess the application of knowledge (Cirit, 2015); (b) do not provide oral and written feedback (Alquraan, Bsharah, & Al-Bustanji, 2010); and (c) their results do not represent what a learner has to accomplish before he or she enters the workforce (Sambell, McDowell, & Montgomery, 2012). The inadequacy and limits of using TAPs, where grading becomes the primary purpose, and the rapid changes in society, knowledge, technology, and globalization of today's world require more emphasis on student life-long learning. This has led to a strong call for using assessment for learning or AAPs to foster productive current and future student learning (e.g., Carless, 2015; Fletcher, Meyer, Anderson, Johnston & Rees, 2012; James, 2014; Postareff, Virtanen, Katajavuori, & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2012). The following section provides a brief description of AAPs, which promote and enhance students' life-long learning.

AAPs are currently called assessment for learning and learning-oriented assessment (Carless, 2015). They are also referred to by different terms such as authentic assessments, naturalistic assessments, direct assessments, performance-based assessments, classroom referenced assessments, and formative assessments. They are characterized by meaningful assessment tasks that form a part of the outcomes-based education curriculum.

In light of my over thirty-five years of teaching in higher education and my thorough literature review of assessment practices in higher education in general and in counselor education specifically, which is included throughout this article, I have developed an operational definition of AAPs that includes six aspects. They are (a) any form of graded or ungraded assessment that engages students in hands-on-activities; (b) requires them to produce an oral, written, or visual response (individually, in pairs, or in small groups); (c) measures learning goals; (d) supports the instruction needed to help students achieve these goals; (e) promotes and enhances student life-long learning; and (f) improves classroom instruction, through oral and/or written feedback. They are classroom-based, goal-oriented, formal, informal, qualitative, and quantitative. To me, AAPs

include both traditional and non-traditional assessment tasks.

Current literature on assessment emphasizes the appropriateness of using AAPs for many reasons. They enhance students' learning naturally and accurately (Cheng & Fox, 2017). This is done by involving them in real-world activities and tasks, which are often called authentic assessment tasks, such as case studies, projects, blogs, debates, and interviews. AAPs also trigger and develop sustained learning for future professional practice (Boud & Falchikov, 2006) by engaging them independently in peer and self-assessment tasks. They motivate students to take more responsibility for their own learning (Libman, 2010). This occurs through students' active participation in peer and self-assessment tasks as well as the facilitative feedback they receive from instructors and peers. This makes students more aware of what they have learned, what they still need to learn, and to be strategic in their own learning processes. Again, AAPs encourage students to engage in the subject matter (Jacoby, Heugh, Bax, & Branford-White, 2014).

Additionally, AAPs give both teachers and learners feedback that is used to change learning through changing instruction (Dunn & Mulvenon, 2009). AAPs cannot be effective without providing immediate, facilitative feedback from teachers and peers. This feedback is utilized to check understandings, clear misconceptions, and inform curriculum design and pedagogy and maximize student learning. Equally important, AAPs help assess the higher-order skills (i.e., analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) of Bloom's Taxonomy (Fajardo, 2011). This is achieved by involving students in authentic assessment tasks such as case studies, crisis interventions, designing treatment plans, and reflective journals. This encourages critical thinking, measures higher-order learning, teaches skills for real job situations, and use of experience as part of the learning process. Furthermore, AAPs are used as an effective element of instruction to enhance students learning (Wiliam, 2011; Wiliam & Thompson, 2008). To clarify, through using AAPs, teachers involve the student in peer and self-assessment tasks as well as teacher-designed assessment tasks that require students' active participation. This active participation

motivates students to think more deeply about their learning, provides them with the opportunities for using the learned information to enhance their learning, helps foster a sense of responsibility for their own learning process and develop critical thinking skills that can be transferred to other learning situations, and makes the link between learning and assessment more explicit. The findings of many studies confirmed that AAPs are constant processes of measuring students' learning, supplying feedback to regulate instruction and learning, preparing learners for summative examinations, and enhancing the curriculum and students' achievement (Cheng & Fox, 2017; Jacoby, Heugh, Bax, & Branford-White, 2014; Knight & Steinbach, 2011).

It is clear that assessment, which is an ongoing process, is very important at the student, course, and/or program level. As discussed in the section on current assessment practices in counselor education programs, the commonly used TAPs represented in the CPCE cannot account for all the KPI assessments in the program. Therefore, there is a need for counselor education programs to use comprehensive assessment plans that include systematic evaluation of students' academic, clinical, and interpersonal progress. According to CACREP standards, assessment of students' knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions is integral. Furthermore, counselor education programs must have a documented, empirically-based plan for systematically evaluating the program objectives, including student learning (CACREP, 2016)
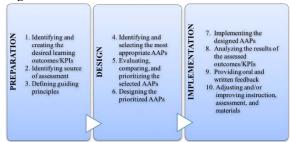
To help overcome the weaknesses of TAPs and the narrowness of CPCE and to achieve the two purposes of assessment: evaluating student learning and certification in counselor education programs, I developed a theoretical framework, based on my thorough review of published literature on assessment for learning (e.g., Banta & Blaich, 2011; Boud & Molloy, 2013; Cain & Hutchings, 2015; Carless, 2014, 2015; Chen & Bonner, 2019; Duncan & Buskirk-Cohen, 2011; Ghaicha, 2016; Hayward & Spencer, 2014). The proposed theoretical framework integrates TAPs (assessment of learning or summative assessment) with AAPs (assessment for learning or formative assessment). Therefore, the purpose of this article is to provide a theoretical framework for using

AAPs in counselor education programs at the student, course, and/or program level. The suggested framework is described in some details in the following section.

The Theoretical Framework

The proposed theoretical framework of using AAPs in counselor education programs, developed and presented in this article has three aims. The first aim is to help counselor educators to understand and promote better planning, design, and implementation of AAPs at the student, course, and/or program level. The second aim is to provide a structured conceptual map of using AAPs. The third aim is to assist actions and improvements in both teaching and assessment practices. The proposed framework emerged from reviewing and analyzing the pertinent literature on assessment practices. It is based on a sequence of three processes: (a) preparation, (b) design, and (c) implementation. The ten-step proposed theoretical framework is presented in Figure 1 and described below.

Figure 1.

Process 1: Preparation
The first process is planning and preparing for using AAPs. It includes:
1. Identifying and creating the desired learning outcomes/KPIs;
2. Identifying the source of assessment; and
3. Defining guiding principles.

Process 2: Design
The second process is designing AAPs. It includes:
4. Identifying and selecting the most appropriate AAPs;
5. Evaluating, comparing, and prioritizing the selected AAPs; and
6. Designing the prioritized AAPs.

Process 3: Implementation

The third process is implementing AAPs. It includes:

7. Implementing the designed AAPs;
8. Analyzing the results of the assessed outcomes/KPIs;
9. Providing oral and written Feedback.
10. Adjusting or improving instruction, assessment, and materials.

The first step is to identify and create the desired learning outcomes/KPIs. This is very essential in planning, designing, and implementing AAPs. According to Marriot and Lau (2008), assessment is a key factor in appraising students' knowledge, understanding, abilities, and skills; therefore, it should be linked to a course or program intended learning outcomes. Therefore, counselor educators are required to identify and create the KPIs that are consistent with CACREP standards. They should create KPIs that include specific and measurable skills, aptitudes, and values that allow them to evaluate their students' achievement of the broader counselor education program goals. Counselor educators can identify and create the KPIs from several possible sources such as institution, department, and program's mission and vision statements, CACREP standards, course syllabi, and department and program discussions.

The second step is to identify the source of assessment. There are three sources for implementing AAPs. These sources are teacher, self, and peer. Counselor educators have to decide if the AAPs will be teacher-implemented such as cases, concept maps, I Know, I Want to know, and I Learned (KWL) etc., peer-implemented such as group discussions, group projects, group presentations, co-counseling peer assessment, think-pair-share, etc., or *self-implemented* such as diaries, journals, reflection logs, self-analysis, self-reflection, cultural autobiography, counseling autobiography, etc. The use of AAPs should involve students as much as possible. Falchikov (2005) stated that to enhance students' life-long learning, they should be involved in assessment through peer and self-assessment. Also, Ozogul and Sullivan (2009) explained that self-assessment and peer assessment have received increased attention as alternative strategies because they involve students more actively in their own learning.

The third step is to define the guiding principles of the AAPs. Counselor educators should make sure that the AAPs are based on the following three principles as described by Carless (2009): (a) assessment tasks should be designed to stimulate productive learning practices amongst students; (b) assessment should involve students actively in engaging with criteria, quality, their own and/or peers" performance; and (c) feedback should be timely and forward-looking to support current and future student learning (pp. 59-60).

The fourth step is to identify and select the most appropriate AAPs that best assess the desired learning outcomes and demonstrate the KPIs created in the preparation process. Counselor educators should select AAPs that best embody the desired learning outcomes to prepare student counselors for deep learning experiences by progressing towards these outcomes. Carless (2007) confirmed that the selected assessment practices/tasks should promote the kind of learning dispositions required of graduates and should mirror real-world applications of the subject matter.

The fifth step is to evaluate, compare, and prioritize the selected AAPs. Counselor educators should evaluate the AAPs on the determined list to select and prioritize the most appropriate AAPs that best assess the desired learning outcomes, demonstrate the KPIs, and promote student counselors' life-long learning. According to Biggs and Tang (2011), the selected AAPs should be constructively aligned with curriculum objectives and content in a way that maximizes the potential for the achievement of worthwhile learning outcomes.

The sixth step is to design the selected and prioritized AAPs. The design of the AAPs is a fundamental component of assessment for learning. It highly affects the kind of learning required of students. When designing AAPs, counselor educators should consider that these designed tasks facilitate productive student learning. This is why Carless, Joughin, and Lui (2006) call them "learning tasks" (p. 9). Counselor educators transform curriculum objectives into specific, observable, and measurable learning outcomes and design assessment tasks that measure progress. In designing the AAPs, counselor educators should make sure that these tasks are authentic and co-

operative rather than competitive. Assessment tasks should be designed to facilitate student involvement through self-monitoring and peer critique.

The seventh step is to implement the designed AAPs. When implementing the designed AAPs, counselor educators should keep in mind that alternative assessment or assessment for learning is a process, not a product. It focuses on "uncovering what and how well the student counselors understand throughout the course of instruction" (Greenstein, 2010, p. 29). Shulman (2007) recommended that curricula be developed utilizing multiple assessment measures, including frequent formative assessment strategies while limiting the use of high-stakes, standardized testing. Counselor educators should utilize a student-centered approach that includes authentic curricular and co-curricular assessment activities to create what Maki (2004) described as, "a sustainable culture of inquiry about students' learning." (p. 2). As discussed by Heritage (2007), counselor educators can implement the designed assessment tasks as on-the-fly assessment, planned-for interaction assessment, and curriculum-embedded assessment. The *on-the-fly assessment,* which is unplanned, is implemented by the counselor educators while a lesson is being taught such as KWL chart and concept maps. The *planned-for interaction assessment* is developed by the counselor educators prior to the lesson and is thought-out in full such as case studies, oral presentations, discussion forums, and logs. The *curriculum-embedded assessment* is meant to provide benchmarks during the entire learning process at predetermined intervals such as projects, portfolios, and debates.

The eighth step is to analyze the results of the assessed outcomes/KPIs. Analyzing and interpreting the results of the assessed outcomes/KPIs and developing recommendations for change is a powerful way to relieve counselor educators' concerns about evaluation and the measurability of student counselors' progress. As explained by Chen and Bonner (2019), understanding how both educators and their students make attributions for the student's performance outcome provides an opportunity for communicating and working together to best support the learners' needs for the next instructional unit or sequence of teaching, learning, and assessment.

Therefore, counselor educators should analyze and interpret assessment results among themselves to improve student learning and curriculum changes. They should also share the results with colleagues, the program coordinator, and the department chair to demonstrate that the program and department are using results to improve student learning on an ongoing basis.

The ninth step is to provide oral and written feedback through self-reflection, peer feedback, and teacher feedback. AAPs take place during learning and are used to inform students of their progress toward openly-stated learning outcomes/KPIs and how they may achieve them, as well as to inform teaching practices. Accordingly, counselor educators should use assessment information to provide descriptive (rather than evaluative) feedback and to alter their instruction to more precisely meet the learning needs of their students (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis & Chappuis, 2004). Feedback is as important to learning as learning itself. Hattie and Timperley (2007) argued that for learning to take place students must be able to see the difference between their current level of knowledge and the intended goals or learning outcomes. The key purpose of feedback is to encourage dialogues of different forms: peer feedback; internal feedback to the self; as well as external feedback from the teacher (Nicol, 2010). Many researchers (e.g., Boud & Molloy, 2013; Carless, 2013; Hayward & Spencer, 2014) argue that effective feedback requires students' involvement in the process of assessment dialogues between the teacher and students.

The tenth step is to adjust and/or improve instruction, assessment, and materials at the student, course and/or program level. Assessment results should be used for continual improvement. They should be linked with action. Banta (2002) defined assessment as the process of providing credible evidence or resources, implementation of actions, and outcomes undertaken for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of instruction, programs, and services. In addition, Penn (2011) concluded that "assessment informs our instruction by revealing effective and ineffective practices and can also be used as an instructional tool" (p. 12). Equally important, Chen and Bonner (2019), confirmed that through classroom

assessments, both teachers and students gain information about student learning and teacher instruction. Accordingly, counselor educators should interpret and evaluate assessment results and decide what recommendations and changes should be made and what measures should be taken to use the results to improve and enhance student counselors' life-long learning according to the resources available. Furthermore, counselor educators should never use assessment results as evidence of a particular student counselor's shortcomings, but as an opportunity to improve their teaching, assessment, and instructional materials, and to do better jobs for the student counselors they serve. The following section describes many AAPs that can be adopted and/or adapted by counselor educators

Suggested Alternative Assessment Practices

The more complete the assessment design, the more appropriate the instruction, grades, and feedback. The greater variety of assessment practices used, the more meaningful those practices may be for students. Literature indicates that while TAPs are designed to document achievement or mastery at a point in time, after learning, in order to report for accountability (Conley, 2005), AAPs are designed to motivate effective learning, bring about high achievement, nurture the inspiration for learning, and form lifelong learning skills for students (Stiggins, 2007). Therefore, the author strongly advocates for integrating AAPs with TAPs to enhance the power of assessment and promote students' life-long learning. This integration supports the emerging movement towards balancing summative assessment with formative assessment to benefit all stakeholders including students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the community, and to have a significant impact on policies regarding school-based assessment (Harlen, 2005). Consequently, the suggested framework presented in this article includes both traditional and non-traditional assessment practices in the list of suggested AAPs.

The suggested AAPs were developed by using two sources. The first is the lived teaching and assessment experiences of the author as a teacher,

teacher educator, and counselor educator. The second is thorough reviewing, analyzing, synthesizing, and formulating current literature on AAPs that could be used in higher education in general and counselor education programs specifically (e.g., Bennett, 2011; Carless, 2009; Chappuis, 2009; Cheng, & Fox, 2017; Hammerman, 2009; Jacoby, Heugh, Bax, & Branford-White, 2014; Popham, 2010; Sambell, McDowell, & Montgomery, 2012).

These suggested AAPs include applications of learned concepts, blogs, bulletin boards, cases, chalk talk, charts, checklists, concept mapping, conferences, cooperative learning activities, creative works, debates, directed paraphrasing, discussions, graphic organizers, exit cards, interactive diaries, interviews, inventories, jigsaw tasks, journals, lecture reaction, logs, observations, online chats, and online discussion forums. They also include peer assessment tasks/strategies (e.g., group discussions, group projects, group presentations, group observation, group-work evaluations, co-counseling peer assessment, think-pair-share, think-pair-share-repeat, etc.) and performance assessment tasks/strategies (e.g., demonstrations, counseling lab activities, audio productions, video productions, etc.). In addition, counselor educators can use other AAPs such as plans, portfolios, oral presentations, panel discussions, profiles, projects, pros and cons grids, questioning, questionnaires, rating scales, reading insights, and role-plays. Moreover, they can use self-assessment tasks/strategies (e.g., reflection logs, weekly self-evaluations, checklists, self-analysis, self-change, self-directed learning experience, self-exploration, self-reflection, pre-course self-assessment, post-course self-assessment, cultural autobiography, counseling autobiography, cultural identity analysis, cultural immersion experience, cultural journey, cultural self-analysis, family genogram analysis, family of origin tree self-reflection, supervisory sessions reflection, ism" impact autobiographical portrait, current issues reflection, etc.), statements, student-generated test questions, summaries, the muddiest point, and three –two – one. Furthermore, counselor educator can use TAPs (multiple-choice exams, quizzes, selection exams [true-false, matching], written response exams [fill in the blanks, short paragraph], and essay exams), twenty

questions, wiki, written analyses, written critiques, written papers, written reports, written reviews, and written summaries.

Conclusion

Changing how and what students learn requires changing the way they are assessed (Norton, Norton, & Shannon, 2013). Such new emphasis requires a shift towards assessment for learning through using AAPs. AAPs contribute to the reconciliation of formative and summative assessment tensions by focusing on good assessment principles potentially applicable to both. Torrance (2007) states, "To promote meaningful learning, researchers suggest that assessment should progress from a traditional assessment of learning to assessment for learning" (p. 281). AAPs also complement TAPs. Moreover, they balance summative assessment with formative assessment to benefit all stakeholders. Stiggins (2002) advocated that AAPs must be balanced with the TAPs so that teachers can feed information back to learners in ways that enable them to think well.

Building a culture of assessment in counselor education requires changing how professional counseling organizations, institutions, counselor education programs, and individual counselor educators carry out their work. Due to the many disadvantages of using TAPs in higher education in general and in counselor education programs specifically, there has been a strong call for using AAPs to promote and enhance student life-long learning. According to Torrance (2012), many researchers observed that many AAPs have become ways of improving grades and supporting learning.

This article presents a suggested framework for using AAPs in counselor education programs, which can also be adapted to other higher education programs. The suggested theoretical framework is based on a sequence of three processes and ten steps: (1) preparation (three steps), (2) design (three steps), and (3) implementation (four steps).

The article also presents many AAPs that can be adopted and/or adapted by counselor educators. The goal of this article has been to raise counselor educators' awareness of integrating assessment for learning with assessment of learning to assess student counselors' achievements and enhance their life-long learning. Additionally, this article establishes a contextual grounding for developing and using student counselor-focused assessment practices at the program level.

References

Alquraan, M. F., Bsharah, M. S., & Al-Bustanji, M. (2010). Oral and written feedback and their relationship with using different assessment methods in higher education. *International Journal of Applied Educational Studies, 7*(1), 43-58.

Banta, T. W. (2002). *Building a scholarship of assessment.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Banta, T. & Blaich, C. (2011). Closing the assessment loop, change: *The Magazine of Higher Learning, 43*(1), 22 – 27. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2011.538642

Barrio Minton, C. A., & Gibson, D. M. (2012). Evaluating student learning outcomes in counselor education: Recommendations and process considerations. *Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation, 3*(2), 73-91. https://doi.org/10.1177/2150137812452561

Bennett, R. E. (2011). Formative assessment: A critical review. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 18*(1), 5–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594x.2010.513678

Biggs, J., & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university* (4th ed.). McGraw Hill & Open University Press.

Boud, D., & Falchikov, N. (2006). Aligning assessment with long-term learning. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 31*(4), 399-413. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930600679050

Boud, D., & Falchikov, N. (2007). Developing assessment for informing judgement. In D. Boud & N. Falchikov (Eds.), *Rethinking assessment in higher education: Learning for the longer term* (pp. 181-197). Routledge.

Boud, D., & Molloy, E. (2013). Rethinking models of feedback for learning: The challenge of design. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 38(6),* 698-712. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2012.691462

Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). (2009). *2009 standards.* http://www.cacrep.org/doc/ 2009%20Standards%20with%20cover.pdf

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). (2016). *2016 CACREP Standards.* http://www.cacrep.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/2016-Standards-with-Glossary.pdf

Cain, T. R., & Hutchings, P. (2015). Faculty and students: Assessment at the intersection of teaching and learning. In G.D. Kuh et al. (Eds.), *Using Evidence of Student Learning to Improve Higher Education* (pp. 95-116). Jossey-Bass.

Carless, D. (2007). Learning-oriented assessment: Conceptual bases and practical implications. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 44*, 57–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703290601081332

Carless, D. (2009). Learning-oriented assessment: Principles, practice and a project. In L. H. Meyer, S. Davidson, H. Anderson, R. Fletcher, P.M. Johnston, & M. Rees (Eds.), *Tertiary Assessment & Higher Education Student Outcomes: Policy, Practice & Research* (pp.79-90). Ako Aotearoa

Carless, D. (2013). Sustainable feedback and the development of student self-evaluative capacities. In S. Merry, M. Price, D. Carless & M. Taras (Eds.), *Reconceptualizing feedback in higher education: Developing dialogue with students* (pp. 113-122). Routledge.

Carless, D. (2014). Exploring learning-oriented assessment processes. *Journal of Higher Education. 68*(4). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-014-9816-z

Carless, D. (2015). *Excellence in university assessment: Learning from award-winning teaching.* Routledge.

Carless, D., Joughin, G., & Lui, N-F. (2006). *How assessment supports learning: Learning-oriented assessment in action.* Hong Kong University Press.

Center for Credentialing and Education. (2014). *Counselor preparation comprehensive examination.* http://www.cce-global.org/cpce

Chappuis, J. (2009). *Seven strategies of assessment for learning.* Allyn & Bacon.

Chen, P. & Bonner, S. (2019). A framework for classroom assessment, learning, and self-regulation, *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice,* https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594x.2019.1619515

Cheng, L., & Fox, J. (2017). *Assessment in the language classroom: Teachers supporting student learning.* Palgrave McMillan.

Cirit, N. C. (2015). Assessing ELT pre-service teachers via web 2.0 tools: Perceptions toward traditional, online and alternative assessment. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology, 14 (3)*9-19. http://www.tojet.net/articles/v14i3/1432.pdf

Conley, M.W., (2005). *Connecting standards and assessment through literacy.* Pearson Education, Inc.

Council for Higher Education Accreditation (2012). *2011CHEA Almanac of external quality review,* Council for Higher Education Accreditation

Deneen, C., & Boud, D. (2014). Patterns of resistance in managing assessment change. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 39*(5), 577-591. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2013.859654

Duncan, T. & Buskirk-Cohen, A. A. (2011). Exploring learner-centered assessment: A cross-disciplinary approach. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 23*(2), 246-259.

http://www.isetl.org/ijtlhe/articleView.cfm?id=977

Dunn, K. E., & Mulvenon, S. W. (2009). A critical review of research on formative assessment: The limited scientific evidence of the impact of formative assessment in education. *Practical Assessment Research & Evaluation, 14*(7), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203462041

Fajardo, C. (2011). Evaluation of learning outcomes in undergraduate onsite and online accounting courses. *Journal of American Academy of Business, Cambridge, 17*(1), 18-24. http://www.jaabc.com/journal.htmflet

Falchikov, N. (2005). *Improving assessment through student involvement.* Routledge Falmer.

Fletcher, R., Meyer, L., Anderson, H., Johnston, P., & Rees, M. (2012). Faculty and students conceptions of assessment in higher education. *Higher Education, 64*(1), 119-133. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-011-9484-1

Ghaicha, A. (2016). Theoretical Framework for Educational Assessment: A Synoptic Review *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7 (24), 212-231. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1112912.pdf

Greenstein, L. (2010). *What teachers really need to know about formative assessment*. ASCD.

Haberstroh, S., Duffey, T., Marble, E., & Ivers, N. (2014). Assessing student-learning outcomes within a counselor education program: Philosophy, policy, and praxis. *Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation, 5*(1), 28-38. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2150137814527756

Halinen, K., Ruohoniemi, M., Katajavuori, N., & Virtanen, V. (2014). Life science teachers' discourse on assessment: A valuable insight into the variable conceptions of assessment in higher education. *Journal of Biological Education, 48*(1), 16-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/00219266.2013.799082

Hammerman, E. (2009). *Formative assessment strategies for enhanced learning in science, K-8*. Corwin.

Harlen, W. (2005). Teachers' summative practices and assessment for learning: Tensions and synergies. *The Curriculum Journal, 16*(2), 207-223. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585170500136093

Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, *77*(1), 81-112. https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487

Hayward, L., & Spencer, E. (2014). Assessment for learning. In M. Carroll & M. McCulloch (Eds.), *Understanding teaching and learning in primary education* (pp. 163-175). Sage.

Heritage, M. (2007, October). Formative assessment: What do teachers need to know and do? *Phi Delta Kappan, 89*(2), 140-145. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170708900210

Hernández, R. (2012). Does continuous assessment in higher education support student learning? *Higher Education, 64*(4), 489-502. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-012-9506-7

Hickson, S., Reed, W. R., & Sander, N. (2012). Estimating the effect on grades of using multiple-choice versus constructive-response questions: Data from the classroom. *Educational Assessment, 17*(4), 200-213. https://doi.org/10.1080/10627197.2012.735915

Jacoby, J. C., Heugh, S., Bax, C., & Branford-White, C. (2014). Enhancing learning through formative assessment. *Innovations in Education & Teaching International, 51*(1), 72-83. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2013.77197

James, D. (2014). Investigating the curriculum through assessment practice in higher education: The value of a 'learning cultures' approach. *Higher Education, 67*, 155–169. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-013-9652-6

Knight, L. V., & Steinbach, T. A. (2011). Adapting peer review to an online course: An exploratory case study. *Journal of Information Technology Education, 10*, 81-99. https://doi.org/10.28945/1369

Libman, Z. (2010). Alternative assessment in higher education: An experience in descriptive statistics. *Studies in Educational Evaluation,*

36(1), 62-68.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2010.01.002

Maki, P. L. (2004). *Assessing for learning: Building a sustainable commitment across the institution.* Stylus Publishing.

Marriot, P., & Lau, A. (2008). The use of on-line summative assessment in undergraduate financial accounting course. *Journal of Accounting Education, 26,* 773-90. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaccedu.2008.02.001

Nicol, D. (2010). From monologue to dialogue: Improving written feedback processes in mass higher education. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 35*(5), 501-517. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602931003786559

Norton, L., Norton, B., & Shannon, L. (2013). Revitalising assessment design: What is holding new lecturers back? *Higher Education. 66*(2), 233–251. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-012-9601-9

Ozogul, G., & Sullivan, H. (2009). Student performance and attitudes under formative evaluation by teacher, self and peer evaluators. *Education Technology Research & Development, 57,* 393-410. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-007-9052-7

Penn, J. D. (2011). The case for assessing complex general education student learning outcomes. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 149*, 5-14. https://doi.org/10.1002/ir.376

Popham, W. J. (2010). *Everything school leaders need to know about assessment.* Corwin.

Postareff, L., Virtanen, V., Katajavuori, N., & Lindblom-Ylänne, S. (2012). Academics' conceptions of assessment and their assessment practices. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 38*(3), 84-92. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2012.06.003

Reynolds, C. R., Livingston, R. B. & Willson, V. (2009). *Measurement and Assessment in Education (2nd ed.).* Pearson.

Sambell, K., McDowell, L., & Montgomery, C. (2012). *Assessment for learning in higher education.* Routledge.

Shulman, L. S. (2007). Counting and assessment and the quest for accountability. *Change,39* (1), 20-25. https://doi.org/10.3200/chng.39.1.20-25

Stiggins, R. J. (2002). Assessment crisis: The absence of assessment for learning. *Phi Delta Kappan, 83*(10), 758-765. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170208301010

Stiggins, R. J. (2007). Assessment through the student's eyes. *Educational Leadership, 64*(8), 22-26. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237491140_Assessment_Through_the_Student%27s_Eyes

Stiggins, R. J., Arter, J., Chappuis, J., & Chappuis, S. (2004). *Classroom assessment for student learning: Doing it right, using it well.* Assessment Training Institute.

Torrance H. (2007) Assessment as learning? How the use of explicit learning objectives, assessment criteria and feedback in post-secondary education and training can come to dominate learning. *Assessment in Education, 14*(3), 281–294. https://doi.org/10.1080/09695940701591867

Torrance, H. (2012). Formative assessment at the crossroads: Conformative, deformative and transformative assessment. *Oxford Review of Education, 38*(3), 323-342. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2012.689693

Urofsky, R. (2010). Critical consideration for a 2009 self-study. *CACREP Connection.* www.cacrep.org

Warden, S., & Benshoff, J. (2012) Testing the engagement theory of program quality in CACREP-accredited counselor education programs. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 51*(2), 127-140. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2012.00009.x

Webber, K. (2012). The use of learner-centered assessment in US colleges and universities. *Research in Higher Education, 53*(2), 201-228. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-011-9245-0

William, D., & Thompson, M. (2008) Integrating assessment with learning: What will it take to make it work? In C. A. Dwyer (Ed.), *The future of assessment: Shaping teaching and learning.* (pp. 53-82). Routledge.

William, D. (2011). *Embedded formative assessment.* Solution Tree Press.

Wormeli, R. (2006). *Fair isn't always equal: Assessing and grading in the differentiated classroom.* Stenhouse Publishers.

An Examination of Self-Reported White Allies: An Interpretative Qualitative Analysis

Amanda M. Evans, Karli Fleitas, Chippewa Thomas, Anne Metz, & Tiffanie Sutherlin

Health disparities exist causing People of Color to be underserved in behavioral health treatment. To address this inequality, it is imperative that the role of White allies is considered in improving behavioral health outcomes. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis method was used to examine 11 self-described White ally experiences. Themes included awareness, advocacy, graduate coursework, values of the family of origin, and community engagement. Recommendations for counselor educators and researchers are included.

Keywords: White ally, People of Color, race-based trauma

Disparities exist in the accessibility and continuation of behavioral health services for People of Color (POC) (Evans, et al, 2015; Evans, et al, 2020). This issue is compounded by pervasive experiences with racism and discrimination in the United States and the professional behavioral health settings (Henkel et al., 2006). POC, who have experienced racism and discrimination, may report symptoms such as depression, anxiety, increased use of alcohol/substances, poor self-esteem, health complications, and decreased self-worth (Bryant-Davis, 2007; Evans, et al, 2015; Forsyth & Carter, 2014). The result of these challenges is that many behavioral health issues experienced by POC go untreated (Gee et al., 2012). For the purposes of this manuscript, POC are conceptualized as non-White individuals and may include, but are not limited to, African American, American Indian, Arab American, Asian American, Latinx American, and multiracial American individuals (Hunter, 2002; Moses, 2016). The term POC is frequently used in the United States and Canada and may be important to utilize in professional literature due to its inclusive nature. "POC have the potential to form solidarities with other [POC] for collective political, and social action on behalf of many disenfranchised or marginalized people" (Moses, 2016, para. 9).

One invisible, yet distinct factor contributing to the oppression of POC is White privilege (Diangelo, 2018; McIntosh, 1998). White privilege is often referred to as unearned advantages that are present in the community, educational, and workplace environments (Edwards, 2006; McIntosh, 1988). Considering the significant impact of these privileges, researchers have noted that some White individuals are unaware or unwilling to address the impact of racism and discrimination experienced by POC due to the inherent advantages of ignoring them (Anderson, 2015; Case, 2012). From a systemic perspective, White individuals have the privilege to identify as the majority, ignore and/or dismiss racism and discrimination as experienced by others, and express disapproval in discussions of unearned racial privileges (Wildman, 1996). This refusal to validate the experiences of POC can lead to overt and covert microaggressions that contribute to race-based trauma and the negative symptomology associated with racism and discrimination (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005). In the current literature, the impact of White

individuals, White privilege, and institutional racism on behavioral health disparities and race-based trauma are largely understudied (Evans, et al, 2020, Pulliam, et al., 2019). It is imperative that researchers begin to examine the wide variance of attitudes and attributions of White individuals, along with the significant impact of White privilege on issues of racism, discrimination, and behavioral health disparities in the United States.

White professionals in healthcare and behavioral healthcare environments that do not recognize the persistence of racism and discrimination in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels are likely to perpetuate health disparities for POC that can lead to additional trauma and discrimination (Hemmings & Evans, 2018). Within the disciplines of counseling and psychology, there is a dearth of research on the impact of White privilege in the workplace, racism and discrimination in clinical practices by White professionals, and the identification of race-based trauma in working with POC. (Hemmings & Evans, 2018). As the counseling profession acknowledges the importance of cultural competence, it is important to extend this concept beyond knowledge, skills, and awareness to recognize forms of oppression and privilege and work to dismantle them (Arrendondo et al., 1996; Sue & Sue, 2019).

In the current era, there is a wide variance of how White individuals respond to issues of racial inequality and oppression. One example is the riots in Charlottesville, Virginia which included White protesters advocating for the removal of a Robert E. Lee statue and the death of Heather Heyer, a White woman, who died fighting against racial injustices. Advocates like Heather may be referred to as a white ally. A white ally is an individual who "could be helpful in promoting understanding of or addressing discrimination targeting the participant's group," (Brown & Ostrove, 2013, p. 2213). White allies have the potential to assist in improving health and behavioral health outcomes for POC as they can model appropriate ally behaviors while supporting cultural competence training and working to reduce

within-group discrimination. In the counseling profession, this may include counselors recognizing the impact of race-based trauma in POC, implementing a framework that supports White ally identity, and providing accountability in White individuals to address issues of racism and discrimination (Evans, et al., 2016). To serve as a white ally is a continual process that requires self-sacrifice and consistent reflection that asks *how* allies will work to advocate for individuals of other races (Patton & Bondi, 2015).

White Individuals, Racism, and Discrimination

Promoting institutional and systemic change to address racial inequality can be difficult with white individuals in power who adhere to mainstream cultural norms (Howard, 2000). According to Boutte and Jackson (2013), white professionals, in discussions of racism and discrimination, experience a wide range of responses that may include: 1) feelings of being attacked; 2) color-blind attitudes; and 3) responses that reflect political values and maintain the status quo. Ultimately, these responses deflect from the institutional or systemic issue(s) and can perpetuate oppression (Boutte & Jackson, 2013).

"Individuals who are supportive of social justice efforts are not always effective in their anti-oppression efforts. Some who genuinely aspire to act as social justice allies are harmful, ultimately, despite their best intentions, perpetuating the system of oppression they seek to change" (Edwards, 2006, p. 39). In professional settings, ineffective approaches to White allyship may include supporting institutional racism by allowing oppressive policies to remain in place stemming from fear of judgment, remaining silent in discussions that oppress others, and joining with colleagues of color after a meeting to acknowledge their contribution while appearing neutral during the meeting (Boutte & Jackson, 2013). In these examples, the White person did not leverage his or her position of power to advocate for POC and instead potentially caused additional harm.

According to Edwards (2006) there are three types of allies:

1) allies motivated by personal interest (e.g., friends or family) and lack a larger understanding of institutional oppression;
2) allies with altruistic motives and good intentions but tend to perpetuate racial oppression despite their understanding of White privilege; and
3) allies motivated by social justice and are able to conceptualize institutional/systemic forms of oppression. Allies with a social justice motive have the potential to make the largest impact in their allyship due to their desire to move beyond helping individuals and truly advocate for equality for all.

Considering the importance of addressing racial inequality in the provision of behavioral healthcare services, it is important for the counseling profession to consider how White allies can be utilized to improve the delivery of counseling services. This may include identifying guidelines to assist in White ally development for practicing counselors, implementing training recommendations to empower White counselors-in-training, and increased research on White allies in behavioral health and higher education. To initiate this work, researchers must obtain additional information on White allies and ally development. The purpose of this current study is to examine self-reported White ally experiences of becoming an ally. It is believed that by studying self-identified allies, primary themes could be identified to help in the conceptualization of ally development to inform future training and research objectives. To collect this data, self-identified White allies (n=11) provided their narrative experiences to researchers, and this information was thematically coded using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The intention of this study was to collect real-life examples of self-identified White allies and their experiences in becoming an ally to assist in the continued discourse of ally development especially as it relates to training helping professionals and future research.

Methodology

A qualitative, interpretative phenomenological approach was utilized to examine the shared experiences of self-described White allies regarding their definition of and journey in becoming a White ally. The primary research question was: What are the lived experiences of self-described White allies and how do they define this identity? Secondary research questions were: (a) how do White allies define their role as an ally; and (b) how do White allies describe their journey in becoming an ally? This study was part of a larger study and additional data was collected.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was selected as the method for analyzing the data of this study because it is a detailed phenomenological approach that attempts to explore a specific phenomenon or event (Smith et al., 2009). IPA supports the researcher in examining the lived experiences and meaning-making of subject responses in-depth. IPA utilizes a double-hermeneutic method of analysis so that the researcher can interpret the participants' interpretations of a phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009).

Procedure

Demographic information was collected in addition to semi-structured questionnaire information. A Qualtrics link was provided containing the Informed Consent and stimulus questions (i.e., describe how you define the term White ally and describe your journey in becoming a White ally). Respondents were prompted to respond to the open-ended questions. This method allowed members to review their responses before officially submitting them.

Institutional review board approval was sought before collecting data. Participants were recruited via convenience sampling by posting participation requests to the Counselor Education and Supervision Network (CESNET) and LinkedIn electronic mailing lists. Individuals who were interested in participating in the study could select the hyperlink embedded within the posting and were redirected to a Qualtrics, secure page. This online method of recruiting participants was selected because of the target population identified, the research topic, and the strengths of utilizing media technology to collect data (Neuendorf, 2017). Participants were reminded that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Participants

A total of eleven individuals who self-identified as White allies were used for this study following Smith et al.'s (2009) recommendation that a minimum of ten respondents are needed to reach saturation. Participants included seven (64%) women and four (36%) men between the ages of 26 to 56 (mean age = 41 years) who self-identified as a White ally. All (100%) of respondents identified as White American, non-Latinx. Regarding education, 9% (1) of participants reported earning a bachelor's degree, 64% (7) reported earning a master's degree, and 27% (3) reported earning a doctoral degree. Participants reported that they were employed in education (73%), school counseling (18%), and technology (9%) positions. Income ranged from $25,000 to $210,000 with a mean of $117,500. Participant demographics are visually represented in Table 1. Homogeneity is achieved in IPA through the selection of within-group individuals to allow for the examination of comparisons and contrasts (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). In this case, individuals who identified as exclusively White were included into the study. Pseudonyms are used in this study and included in the table below.

Table 1: Participant information (N = 11)

Name	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation	Income
Jane	Woman	38	Masters	Student	25,000
Bob	Man	56	Doctoral	Educator	Not reported
Mary	Woman	42	Masters	Educator	105,000
Fred	Man	40	Masters	Student	26,000
Sue	Woman	29	Doctoral	Psychologist	47,000
Sarah	Woman	26	Masters	School Coun	42,000
Emma	Woman	41	Masters	School Coun	210,000
Joan	Woman	40	Masters	Corporate Admin	189,000
Chris	Man	49	Doctoral	Educator	200,000
Cad	Man	36	Bachelors	Administrator	150,000
Beth	Woman	47	Masters	Administrator	50,000

Statement of Positionality

The primary researcher, a white woman in her late thirties, believes that white allies can be a resource for diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Inspired by Boutte and Jackson's (2014) *Advice to White Allies: Insights from Faculty of Color, Race Ethnicity and Education,* the primary researcher was influenced by an example in the article when white colleagues remained silent during a faculty meeting while microaggressions were present. Once the faculty meeting ended, the author (a Person of Color) said that they were approached by the white faculty members who had identified the microaggressions in the meetings and chose to remain silent. In this case, the author called white allies to act when microaggressions are observed, not later when the situation is neutralized. This is one example of many where white individuals have acted as bystanders when unsure of how to respond. The primary researcher believes that although many white individuals are well-intentioned, they are frequently unprepared to engage in discussions on racism and discrimination. This assumption extends to counselor training programs and to many white counselors (Hemmings & Evans, 2018).

The research team included one biracial, one white, and two African American females. Four of the researchers are counselor educators and one is a counselor educator-in-training. All of the researchers were influenced by the Boutte and Jackson manuscript and shared this article for review and reflection. Each of the research team members reflected on their own racial identity and the presence of white silence and guilt in their own perspectives of discrimination. Interested in the experiences of self-perceived white allies, the research team reviewed the collected data and emerging themes. All members of the research team believe that white allies are a population within the white community that can engage in discussions on racism and discrimination with other white individuals.

Data Analysis

The dates of data collection were June 2017 to September 2017. The unit of analysis was participant typed responses to stimulus questions. To triangulate the data, the researchers asked participants to reread their responses before submission. Then, researchers employed a peer review process and an audit trail to enhance the validity (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Whereas the peer review process typically involves the evaluation of work by peers within the same field, this process enabled the participant to review his or her own responses prior to submitting them. For the audit trail, the researchers placed the raw data into a codebook with ten columns

including demographic responses and stimulus question responses (Halpern, 1983). This also included data reduction processes (corresponding notes), synthesis products (method conducted to identify themes), and a summary of the analysis findings (Halpern, 1983; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The primary researcher maintained a process journal to bracket her personal reactions. An external auditor, a colleague in Counselor Education and Supervision, reviewed the codebook and derived themes. Collaborations continued until consensus was obtained. The research team comprised two white, female counselor educators, two African American, female counselor educators, and one biracial counselor educator-in-training.

The researchers in this study utilized the IPA six-step method as identified by Smith et al. (2009). The first step was to read and reread each participant's response to identify initial patterns. Then, in the second step, researchers reviewed the responses again to discern the meaning of emerging topics and to begin coding these initial themes. These themes were then reviewed again and compared to the codebook including the raw data to ensure accuracy and interpretation. In this phase of the double-hermeneutic process (Smith et al., 2009), the frequency of participant responses was identified. In the third step, a final list of themes was identified through the agreement of the most prominent themes. This interpretative process was used individually for each of the eleven participants. Once the list was finalized, the researchers conducted a cross-case analysis thereby producing a total of three themes for stimulus question one and five for stimulus question two. This process was received by a peer reviewer to ensure consensus in interpretations. The themes did not change as a result of these discussions and consensus was achieved unanimously.

Results

Through Smith et al.'s (2009) IPA process, a total of two themes were identified concerning how White allies define their role as an ally and three themes were identified in describing the journey in becoming a White ally. For the purposes of IPA, themes are utilized to describe the construct identified by a participant and found across other participants in

similar ways (Smith et al., 2009). Regarding the first stimulus question, participants described their definition of a White ally. In sequence, these included: *Awareness (64%)* and *Advocacy (45%).* For the second question, participants described their journey in becoming a White ally in three themes: *Graduate Coursework in Diversity (36%), Values of Family of Origin (27%),* and *Community Engagement (18%).*

Define Role as a White Ally

Participants in the study defined their role as a White ally with descriptions pertaining to awareness and advocacy which were further explored. Awareness included exposure to POC and acknowledgment of historical traumas. Advocacy included engagement to challenge oppressive systems for POC.

Awareness

The majority of participants (64%) referenced historical and socio-political understanding in defining their role as a White ally. This awareness of injustice and oppression assisted the participants in identifying their own privileges and the inherent disadvantages of POC. Responses include:

"I believe that I am someone who understands the history of oppression and institutional racism in America. I strive to become a multiculturally competent person on a daily basis. I intend to use my race privilege to call people out on their implicit biases and assist African Americans who are facing microaggressions and other forms of discrimination," (Bob, age 56).

and

"Through the acknowledgment of past and present injustices towards minorities of various racial, cultural and orientation backgrounds," (Chad, age 36).

and

"It is my role to understand racism in my community and how it affects my interactions with others and behaviors. Intentionally raise awareness in the White community to issue of race/ethnicity/culture," (Sarah, age 26).

and

"Multiculturally sensitive and understand privilege as a Caucasian," (Fred, age 40).

In these responses, self-described White allies connected their role as an ally with awareness. Awareness extended beyond White identity and included the lived experiences of individuals representing diverse populations.

Advocacy

Forty-five percent of participants identified that their role as a White ally included advocating for POC and working to challenge the multiple levels of systems that enforce oppression. Responses included:

"Advocate with and on behalf of Persons of Color, educator of myself and others about multiculturalism, privilege systems, oppression and power structure," (Mary, age 42).

and

"Advocate for friends. Mentor those who need their eyes opened," (Joan, age 40).

and

"A white person committed to dismantling intersecting systems of oppression," (Sue, age 29).

In these responses, participants identified advocacy activities that challenge interpersonal, institutional, and systematic forms of racism and discrimination. Participants noted that modeling, identifying unequal advantages, and personal commitment were included in their role as an ally.

Describe Journey in Becoming a White Ally

In describing the journey in becoming a White ally, participants reflected on meaningful experiences that influenced their ally identity. These experiences included graduate-level coursework, family/spiritual values that aligned with allyship, and community involvement/ engagement.

Graduate Coursework in Diversity

Thirty-seven percent of participants reported that graduate coursework in diversity and related subjects influenced their transformation into identifying as a

White ally. Examples included advocating for POC and working to challenge systems that enforce oppression, racism, and discrimination. Responses included:

"I was unaware of issues of race until my master's program at [name redacted]. During a multicultural course, I was exposed to the idea of White privilege. I was frustrated that I had lived so long in ignorance and have identified as a White Ally since that day," (Jane, age 38).

and

"The most seminal pieces to my journey have been getting my master's degree in counseling, working as a counselor in a high school, entering a doctoral program in counseling and teaching multicultural counseling to master's students," (Mary, age 42).

In these responses, participants noted that graduate-level coursework addressing diversity and multiculturalism influenced their understanding of oppressive systems. For some, this exposure helped to confront the unawareness of racial inequality.

Values of Family of Origin

Thirty-seven percent of participants reported that their values and family of origin impacted their development into identifying as a White ally. Examples included modeling behaviors of parents and exposure to POC.

"I grew up[in a] diverse community with parents that were respectful of other cultures and genuinely loved all people," (Emma, age 41).

and

"Socially conscious mother who was an educator and ally. Found out as an adult there was a term for people like us," (Joan, age 40).

and

"My family valued equality and diversity. They taught us to understand our White Eurocentric privilege in this country," (Fred, age 40).

In these responses, participants credited their families and parents for educating them on issues of

equality, oppression, and privilege influencing their White ally identity.

Community Engagement

Twenty-six percent of participants reported involvement and engagement in diverse communities influenced their White ally development. This theme represents approximately 1/4th of the population sampled. The researchers decided to include this theme as it contributes to the idea of informational power, suggesting that the information, although not a large representation of the sample, is relevant and not included in the other themes (Vasileiou, et al, 2018).

Responses included:

My journey started in junior high and is actually inspired by my Catholic faith, The Catholic social justice teachings continue to guide my stance on many issues. I also grew up in a wealthy suburb out of Detroit, and the contrast was stark. Adults in my life stoked my curiosity and why that was, and then others reinforced my engagement in changing the "why". Learning about discriminatory real estate practices and school funding based on real estate started to unravel the system for me and I think since that time, I have had a hard time not seeing the threads of the systems that create disparity and reinforce power/privilege dynamics. College, however, was where I think I became more engaged in actions rather than intellectual understanding, but that was because when I arrived with my intellectual understanding, I was drawn to people who were talking about these issues and surrounded myself with people who were working to be allies too. And people of color who I look back now and know were far too patient with me in my process of growth but for whom I am grateful. Those people continue to be part of my social circle to shape my worldview. So, I would say the strongest identity factors that shaped this for me were being Catholic, going to college (PWI), and growing up in a wealthy suburb next to a failing, mostly black city, (Sue, age 29).

and

"I worked in a predominately Black school after graduating. There, I was forced to acknowledge my worldview filters and address them," (Sarah, age 26).

and

"Born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama. Raised in racially biased area. Became involved in community events and moved to desegregated neighborhood. Attended [name redacted] college and took social action classes," (Beth, age 47).

In these responses, participants noted that exposure to individuals of other races and community involvement influenced their identity as a White ally. Several respondents noted disparities and personal biases.

Discussion

The present study examined self-identified White allies as they attempted to define and describe their journeys in becoming an ally. Regarding the term White ally, two themes emerged including awareness (64%) and advocacy (46%). Participants tended to define their identity as a White ally with action-oriented words that sought to increase their understanding of and responsibility to address oppression and racial inequality. In describing their specific journey in becoming a White ally, participants credited graduate-level coursework in diversity (36%), values of the family of origin (36%), and community engagement (27%) as factors that contributed to their ally identity. These activities appeared linked to exposure whether with trusted individuals, coursework, or community involvement that influenced the subject to become more involved in acknowledging issues of race and discrimination. It is posited that ally identity may have evolved as subjects became aware of their privilege and engaged in advocacy in their community.

The results of this study are important to consider for counselor educators, counseling professionals, and social justice advocates as they provide insights on the types of experiences some White individuals encountered that led to their understanding of oppression, privilege, and racial disparities. "As the numbers of diverse individuals and families continue to grow, counselors will increasingly find themselves faced with complex racial problems in their practices" (Braun Williams, 1999, p. 35). It is imperative that White counselors are willing and able to discuss racism and discrimination in counseling (Evans, et al,

2018). Professionals who work with children should especially be mindful of racial identity development as preschool and early childhood are critical developmental periods (Moss & Davis, 2008) for both children of color and White children.

Boutte and Jackson (2013) proposed that mutually beneficial outcomes of addressing racial inequality and oppression may be most successful. Using this method, individuals can collectively join together in addressing issues of oppression at interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels. This concept of White allyship aligns with this recommendation as it is imperative that guidelines are identified to help the White community gain awareness of issues of racism and discrimination and align with like-minded individuals. Currently, there are no evidence-based approaches to train and support White counselors-in-training and counseling professionals in becoming an ally. It is recommended that educators, researchers, and social justice advocates consider the impact of a formalized system to empower and support White allies. This is especially relevant for the counseling profession which possesses a strong identity as social justice advocates as evidenced in the dissemination of ethical guidelines linked to multicultural competency (ACA, 2014) and taskforce competencies (Ratts, et al, 2015). Although the counseling profession espouses the importance of advocacy and social change, the majority of counseling professionals are White (Meyers, 2017).

Considering the current demographic presentation of the counseling profession, it is crucial that the role of White allies is further examined. This includes examining how White allies can address health disparities for POC in the provision of counseling services. Examples may include recognition of implicit biases, engaging in community advocacy, and promoting accountability amongst White counselors. Future research should examine the impact of awareness and advocacy on ally identity development. Furthermore, research on graduate education, family values, and community engagement on ally development is warranted.

Ignoring racism and remaining silent is not an option for white counseling professionals (Boutte & Jackson, 2013). According to Tatum (1994), it is possible that in the transition to becoming an ally, individuals may experience challenges in current personal and professional relationships. Thus, it is recommended that an ally have allies of their own to support their work to address and combat issues of racism and discrimination (Tatum, 1994). In clinical settings, this may include collaborating with like-minded colleagues, attending continuing education trainings/conferences, participating in critical conversations, and reflective self-care activities. With a current paucity in the literature on White allies and counseling, these research findings call for commitment from the counseling profession to develop guidelines to support White ally development and training White counselors as social justice advocates as they work towards confronting interpersonal, institutional, and systemic forms of oppression that have the potential to harm POC.

Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

Although there are some interesting outcomes of this study, the limitations must be considered. First, the method for which participants were recruited may have led to self-selection bias. Participants were recruited using an online sampling technique and in-person interviews were not conducted. There is a chance that this sampling technique may have limited participant responses and is not a complete representation of the topic. Thus, there is also the potential that the results of this study may not be transferable to the larger white population. Additionally, a convenience sampling method was utilized to recruit participants thereby subjects were not randomly selected. As evidenced in the demographic data, this sample represented white individuals with advanced education and higher socio-economic status. Thus, caution must be considered in conceptualizing other white individuals to avoid overgeneralization. In addition, when examining the frequency of themes, only one of the themes (Awareness, 64%) identified in this study had over fifty percent agreement among the participants. The other themes ranged from 45% to 18% of total responses. This is a limitation of the study as the interview questions may not have accurately examined the perception of white ally development. Additionally, additional participant responses may

have enhanced the themes and frequency identified. These limitations should be considered for future studies.

This study contributes to the lack of empirical literature on White allies and the counseling profession. Similar to the LGBTQ population, establishing training guidelines to support White allies has the potential to communicate to POC the security and safety they can find in pursuing behavioral health treatment with a qualified professional. This approach has the potential to improve behavioral health outcomes and the occurrence of racism and discrimination in healthcare treatment. It is recommended that researchers continue to examine the role of White allies in social justice and advocacy initiatives focused on improving the health outcomes for POC. Additionally, White individuals who did not self-identify as an ally were not included in this sample indicating an area for future investigation. It would be helpful to collect information on that sample to glean a deeper understanding of White privilege, discrimination, and oppression in the United States. Lastly, researchers should consider exploring the intersectionality of race, gender, socio-economic status, and other variables to better understand the dynamics of ally identity.

References

American Counseling Association. (2014). *ACA Code of Ethics*. https://www.counseling.org/resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pd

Ancis, J. R., & Szymanski, D. M. (2001). Awareness of White privilege among White counseling trainees, *The Counseling Psychologist*, *29*(4), 548-569. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000001294005

Anderson, E. (2015). "The white space." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*. *1*(1), 10-21. https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649214561306

Arredondo, P., Toporek, R., Brown, S. P., Jones, J., Locke, D. C., Sanchez, J., & Stadler, H. (1996). Operationalization of the multicultural counseling competencies. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, *24*(1), 42–78. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1912.1996.tb00288.x

Boutte, G. S., & Jackson, T. O. (2013). Advice to White allies: Insights from faculty of color. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education, 17*(5), 623-642. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2012.759926

Brown, K. T., & Ostrove, J. M. (2013). What does it mean to be an ally?: The perception of allies from the perspective of people of color. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *43*(11), 2211-2222. https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12172

Bryant-Davis, T. (2007). Healing requires recognition: The case of race-based traumatic stress. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *35*(1), 135-143. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/0011000006295152

Bryant-Davis, T., & Ocampo, C. (2005). Racist incident-based trauma. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *33*(4), 479-500. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/0011000005276465.

Case, K. A. (2012). Discovering the privilege of whiteness: White women's reflections on anti-racist identity and ally behavior. *Journal of Social Issues*, *68*(1), 78-96. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2011.01737.x

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Diangelo, R., (2018). *White fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism.* Beacon Press.

Edwards, K. E. (2006). Aspiring social justice ally identity development: A conceptual model. *Journal of Student Affairs Reaserch and Practice*, *43*(4),39-60. https://doi.org/ 10.2202/1949-6605.1722

Evans, A.M., Williams, B., Staton, R., Green, D., & Shepard, C. (2020). Allyship the responsibility of white individuals in addressing racism and discrimination: A qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Responsibility*, *3*(2), 27-42. https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/ijr/vol3/iss2/4/

Evans, A.M., East, C., Appling, B., Wright, S., & Branch, J. (2018). Responding to instances

of perceived racism and discrimination: An ethnographic content analysis. *The Alabama Counseling Association Journal*, *42*, 61-78.

Evans, A.M., Hemmings, C., Burkhalter, C., & Lacy, V. (2015). Responding to race related trauma: Counseling and research recommendations to promote post-traumatic growth when counseling African American men. *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision*, *8*, 78-103. https://doi.org/10.7729/81.1085

Forsyth, J. M., & Carter, R. T. (2014). Development and preliminary validation of the racism-related coping scale. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice and Policy*, *6*(6), 632-643. http://dx.doi.org/10/1037/a0036702.

Gee, G. C., Walsemann, K. M., & Brondolo, E. (2012). A life course perspective on how racism may be related to health inequities. *American Journal of Public Health*, *102*(5), 967-974. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2012.300666

Halpern, E. S. (1983). *Auditing naturalistic inquiries: The development and application of a model* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Indiana University.

Hemmings, C., & Evans, A.M. (2018). Identifying and treating race-based trauma in counseling. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, *46*, 20-30. https://doi.org/10.1002/jmcd.12090

Henkel, K. E., Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L. (2006). Institutional discrimination, individual Racism, and hurricane Katrina. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, *6*(1), 99-124. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1530-2415.2006.00106.x

Howard, G. (2000). *White teachers at the crossroad: How we are white*. Teaching Tolerance. http://www.tolerance.org/magazine/number-18-fall-2000/white-teachers-crossroads

Hunter, M. L., (2002). "If you're light you're alright": Light skin color as social capital for women of color. *Gender & Society*, *16*(2), 175-193. https://doi.org/10.1177/08912430222104895

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.

McIntosh, P. (1988). White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies. Working paper No. 189. Wellesley, Massachusetts: Wellesley Center for Research on Women.

Meyers, L. (October 25, 2017*). Making the counseling profession more diverse.* Counseling Today, https://ct.counseling.org/2017/10/making-counseling-profession-diverse/.

Moses, Y. (2016, December 7). *Is the term "people of color" acceptable in this day and age?* Sapiens, https://www.sapiens.org/column/race/people-of-color/

Moss, R.C., & Davis, D. (2008). Counseling biracial students: A review of issues and interventions. *The Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 36*(4), 219-230. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1912.2008.tb00084.x

Neuendorf, K. A., (2017). *The content analysis guidebook* (2nd ed). Sage Publications.

Patton, L. D., & Bondi, S. (2015). Nice White men or social justice allies: Using critical race theory to examine how White male faculty and administrators engage in ally work. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, *18*(4), 488-514. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2014.1000289

Phoenix, A. (1997). "I'm White! So what?" The construction of whiteness for young Londoners. In M. Fine, L. Weis, L.C., Powell, & L. Mun Wong (Eds). *Off White: Reading on Race, power, and society* (pp. 187-197). Routledge.

Pietkiewicz, I., & Smith, J. A. (2014). A practice guide to using interpretative phenomenological analysis in qualitative research psychology. *Psychological Journal*, *20*(1), 7–14. https://doi.org/10.14691/CPPJ.20.1.7

Pulliam, N., Paone, T.R., Malott, K.M., & Shannon, J. (2019), The experieces of students of

color as a predominately white institution: Implications for counselor training. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, *47*(4), 239-255. https://doi.org/10.1002/jmcd.12156

Ratts, M. J., Singh, A. A., Nassar-McMillan, S., Butler, S. K., & Rafferty McCollough, J. (2015). Multicultural and social justice counseling competencies: Guidelines for the counseling profession. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, *44,* 28-48. https://doi.org/10.1002/jmcd.12035

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. Sage Publications.

Sue, D & Sue, D. (2019). *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice*, (8th Ed.). Wiley.

Tatum, B. D. (1994). *Teaching White students about racism: The search for White allies and the restoration of hope.* Teachers College Record, *95*(4), 462-476. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Tea

ching-White-students-about-racism%3A-The-search-of-Tatum/9061cac5900fe687a31c704a1179de3 a9eed59f9

Thompson, C. E., & Neville, H. A. (1999). Racism, mental health, and mental health practice. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *27*(2), 155-223. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000099272001

Vasileious, K., Barnett, J., Thorpe, S., & Young, T. (2018). Characterizing and justifying sample size sufficiency in interview-based studies: Systematic analysis of qualitative health research over a 15 year period. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *18*, 148. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-018-0594-7

Wildman, S. M. (1996). *Privilege revealed: How invisible preference undermines America*. New York University Press.

Williams, B. (1999). Claiming a biracial identity: Resisting social constructions of race and culture. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *77*, 32-39. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1999.tb02412.x

Five Ways to Embed Strengths in Counselor Training

John McCarthy & Brittany L. Pollard-Kosidowski

The strengths-based approach in counseling has roots in humanism, among other areas, and has gained more attention in recent years. However, the literature is relatively scarce in describing ways to integrate this approach in counselor education. This article provides five recommendations for emphasizing strengths identification and utilization in counselor training, adapting programmatic culture to be more strengths-oriented, and developing a counseling course focused on strengths-based approaches.

Keywords: strengths; counselor education; counselor training; counseling

The notion that attending to personal strengths can aid the counseling process is long-standing. At its core, the essence of this professional helping process involves supporting clients as they pursue more meaningful lives, a journey that most often entails the application of one's strengths (Jones-Smith, 2014). Linley (2008) described strengths as "a pre-existing capacity for a particular way of behaving, thinking, or feeling that is authentic and energizing to the user" (p. 9) and as something that assists a person in moving toward personally optimal functioning.

The literature on the exploration of strengths in counseling and psychotherapy has existed for decades, with an increasing focus on the benefits of infusing strengths-based approaches into contemporary clinical work. According to Young et al. (2017), both Rogers (1961) and Maslow (1971) merit credit for initiating this focus. Although strengths were not overtly addressed, Weick (1983) described a new "health-oriented paradigm" (p. 467) and its implications for social work professionals. This shift away from the traditionally used medical model to a more holistic perspective involved placing a stronger emphasis on the therapeutic relationship, whereby helping professionals openly communicate their perspectives on the strengths their clients possess. Stalling (1994) recounted the origin of the strengths-based approach, asserting that it was derived from the social work profession of the 1980s. Subsequently, Modrcin, (1985; as cited in Stalling, 1994) and Rapp et al. (1988) developed a social work case management model rooted in a strengths-based perspective, while Saleebey (1992) edited one of the first books specific to the use of strengths in social work.

Yet, despite the wealth of strengths-focused history in helping profession literature, a paradox may reside specifically within the training of counselors. On one hand, strengths-based approaches have gained more attention in recent decades through contributions from positive psychology, narrative therapy, and solution-focused counseling in particular (Jones-Smith, 2014). However, the inherent connection between a strengths-based approach and counseling practice is rather limited. Harris et al. (2007) noted that the justifications and techniques bridging strengths-oriented positive psychology to the everyday work of counselors are lacking. Smith (2006) criticized the field of counseling psychology for indicating a commitment to strengths throughout the lifespan, but failing to identify any actionable plan for accomplishing this objective. The same point could apply to counselor training programs that promote the value of the strengths-based perspective, but may not be adequately attending to strengths throughout trainee experiences. In our opinion, this challenge is especially important for counselors-in-training, as the continuously evolving strengths-based approach could potentially boost students' development both during their graduate program and beyond. To this end, we offer five recommendations for counselor educators to consider in fostering a strengths-based approach in the classroom and in the programmatic culture at large.

John McCarthy, Department of Counseling, Indiana University of Pennsylvania (john.mccarthy@iup.edu)
Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to John McCarthy, 206 Stouffer Hall, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA 15705. (Email: jmccarth@iup.edu).

Five Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Shift the Culture to Include Strengths

Henderson (2007) related a story that, in our estimation, could apply to many counselors-in-training, and it points to the reluctance of openly expressing one's strengths:

> I recently asked a group of teenagers and adults to identify their strengths. Both ages were at a loss—neither group could name strengths, and both were hesitant to share out loud even tentative ideas about what their strengths might be. (p. 9)

Despite their conviction that "strengths are good for you," (p. 1), Rettew and Lopez (2008) observed a cultural reluctance to acknowledging one's own strengths, as speaking of such topics may be viewed by others as boastful and obnoxious. People maximize their capabilities when building upon their respective strengths, and we contend that the same point applies to counselors-in-training. Counselor educators are positioned to mindfully foster a learning culture where openly talking about personal strengths is not only accepted, but encouraged. Kostohryz (as cited in Kleist et al., 2017) postulated that operating from a strengths-based foundation would allow counselor educators to focus on each trainee's individual potential, rather than on their deficits in learning. A further benefit is represented by the fact that tapping into one's strengths can become contagious in an asset-focused environment similar to what we describe below. Kostohryz asserted that such an approach would teach trainees how strengths can be cultivated in those close to them, including clients, colleagues, and other university and community members. Through experiencing continued references to strengths throughout the course of a semester, students' self-efficacy around professional development as counselors-in-training could be fortified.

A programmatic culture shift that embraces strengths would be consistent with the Communitarian Training Culture (CTC) used in professional psychology (Johnson et al., 2014). This training model emphasizes a culture of competence combined with a shared sense of character and involves components such as compassion, honesty, and collaborative engagement. The addition of personal trainee strengths would seem to align with CTC aims, and would likely elevate the value of students' assets from both student and faculty perspectives. This idea could be accomplished by adding a section dedicated to strengths in the programmatic student handbook and placing the topic at the forefront of new student orientation. Including strengths in a programmatic mission statement might also be a worthwhile consideration.

Recommendation #2: Mindfully Teach about Strengths and their Importance in Working with Clients

In discussing clinical results, Duncan's (2010) words to counselors are critical: "You definitely matter to outcome" (p. 22). Therapeutic factors represent a predictive measure for speculating about the end result of the counseling process. In addressing data on which therapists may be more clinically effective than others, Duncan noted that one possibility lies in the timing of strength utilization in counseling, writing that "successful therapists focused on their clients' strengths from the very start" (2010, p. 22). Though less successful counselors also focused on these strengths, they tended to do so at the end of the therapeutic process.

Given these findings, training specific to strength identification and conceptualization in clients may be helpful. Sparks and Duncan (2016) noted that, from the outset of the training experience, students are taught primarily about "superstar theories and therapists" (p. 68). However, clients are often left out of the picture, and much of class discussion inevitably revolves around what counselors do *to* or *for* clients instead of focusing on clients themselves as the central agents of change. A shift in case conceptualization, whereby therapists know how to effectively integrate strengths into the treatment process, could also be considered in counselor training.

In addition, strengths-based training would offer students a language through which personal assets could be better communicated with clients. Writing from a counseling psychology viewpoint, Smith (2006) contended that a strengths-based counseling model was one in which discussing client strengths represented a fundamental intervention. She added, "although many counselors may have a vague notion about helping clients to recognize their strengths, I maintain that therapists should enter each therapeutic relationship wearing magnifying glasses focused on detecting and using clients' strengths" (p. 136).

Encouraging trainees to consider, identify, and use client strengths takes practice, particularly if a "seek problem first" mindset has settled in. Here, we offer several suggestions. First, in any clinical course, a strengths-based identification exercise can be done using strength cards. Fouracres and van Nieuwerburgh (2020) described this activity in a study on professional coaching, where participants chose positive qualities from strength cards printed from the VIA Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Second, in a basic skills course, the instructor might prompt a strengths-based perspective by showing a counseling session video, followed by facilitating a purposeful discussion of client resources and beneficial thinking patterns and behaviors. This may be a particularly effective strategy if scenarios depicting clients with obvious strengths and motivating factors, as well as those with less readily identifiable capabilities and proactive tendencies, are included. In a counseling theories course, students may be assigned to complete a case conceptualization assignment focused on uncovering and highlighting assets, resources, and competencies for a fictitious client. This process can be enlightening for trainees, particularly those who have developed a problem-oriented mindset.

Kleist et al. (2017) offered examples of a strengths-based activity integrated into two core counseling courses. In one example, Kostohryz utilized a reflecting team as students role-played various theories (Kleist et al., 2017). The aim of the reflecting team was to encourage student movement toward utilizing a strengths-oriented approach within their respective theory. After observing the role-play, the reflecting team provided hypotheses and recommendations that included highlighting counselor strengths. In the second example, Kostohryz used a strengths-based reflecting team in a testing course to help students compare the facilitation of qualitative and quantitative assessments (Kleist et al., 2017).

Counselor educators may consider the integration of strengths in other courses as well. For instance, a section focused on identifying and utilizing client strengths would be highly applicable in a career counseling course. One recent example of a relevant topic in this domain is the strengths-based inclusive theory of work (S-BIT of Work), a holistic vocational theory that emphasizes individuals' assets and functioning (Owens et al., 2019).

A course solely focused on strengths-based theories could also be implemented. Though many counseling theories emerged from the late 1950s to the 1980s, one specific approach was immediately distinctive in its emphasis on strengths: solution-focused therapy. De Shazer et al. (1986) described their brief therapeutic approach as using "what clients bring with them to meet their needs" (p. 208), an arsenal that often includes unique personal traits and resources. DeJong and Berg (1998) initially viewed the shift to a strengths-based perspective as "a daunting challenge" (p. 11) that would require new techniques to be developed. However, several other theories have followed suit by subsequently integrating strengths into their own underlying principles. For example, Padesky and

Mooney (2012) developed a strengths-based approach to cognitive behavioral therapy, while narrative approaches have increasingly focused on helping clients to author stories of strength and resilience (Hamkins, 2014; Hood & Carruthers, 2016). More recently, Jose and Padmakumari (2016) proposed a three-phase psychotherapy model rooted in character strength development, which could be covered in either a specific course on strengths-based approaches or in a more traditional theories course setting.

Recommendation #3: Use Formal Instruments to Measure Trainees' Strengths at the Outset of the Program

If the second recommendation for helping counselors-in-training to readily identify their strengths is adopted, then a process by which to do this must also be established. We agree with Rath's (2007) assertion that "…most people are either unaware of, or unable to describe, their own strengths…or the strengths of people around them" (p. 13) and contend that this sentiment certainly applies to graduate students in counseling. To this end, counselors-in-training could realize benefits by completing a formal measure of personal strengths early in their coursework. The results could aid students in achieving greater self-insight from the outset of their graduate training, a period often characterized by significant stress and anxiety (Foster et al., 2016). Reflecting on these results may help to buffer new counselors-in-training for the inevitable stressors of their initial semester.

Another potential benefit is enabling trainees to view their own collection of strengths and recognize their evolution over the course of their training. Counselor educators may consider administering the same measure near the completion of students' graduate programs. This data would provide trainees with the opportunity to reflect on any shifts related to their personal strengths across time and bolster their strengths-focused mindset as they enter the profession.

Based on a co-author's work, Kleist et al. (2017) outlined various classroom activities that can be facilitated after completion of the VIA-IS (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). A series of questions, such as "*Which of your strengths do you experience as most like you?*" can aid students in reflecting on assessment results (p. 284). Trainees can also learn about signature strengths, a concept reflecting primary assets used most effortlessly and genuinely. The authors also described using the VIA-IS (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) in team-based fashion with a first-semester doctoral cohort to explore their group interaction and cohesiveness.

Recommendation #4: Consider the Integration of Strengths Utilization into an Internship Course

Students approaching the end of their graduate programs often feel anxious about an array of challenges: (a) performance at their field sites, (b) the impending job search, and (c) perhaps even questions about their competence and capabilities as budding professional counselors. At the same time, recent graduates may encounter multiple stressors upon accepting their first job, including learning to navigate a new agency or school setting, fortifying their counselor identity, and engaging in a taxing licensure process, all of which could weaken professional self-efficacy, detract from self-care practices, and ultimately contribute to burnout.

A strengths-based component within an internship experience course could arm graduates-to-be with a heightened sense of self-efficacy as they begin their post-graduate career. It may also foster a greater sense of purpose in their work and buffer against the dangers of burnout. Findings from Allan et al. (2019) could be integrated at this juncture. In their study of character strengths utilizing the VIA-IS (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), practicing counselors reported higher scores on 13 of the 24 character strengths when compared to a normed sample, including strengths such as love of learning, perspective, and social intelligence. If an exit interview is a part of a program's closing activities, counselor educators might consider asking students to create a strengths-based plan as they venture into their professional careers, keeping in mind that certain character strengths may decrease burnout and add to one's sense of worthwhile work (Allan et al., 2019).

Finally, many graduating students will eventually transition into the role of supervisor, meaning that an introduction to strengths-based supervision may behoove them during their internship course. Edwards (2017) differentiated a medical model approach from a strengths-based framework in supervision, positing that the former offers a process whereby supervisees present with difficulties encountered with clients, while the latter starts with a question of where supervisees experienced success. A strengths-based supervisor is an "encourager" of supervisees' personal and professional assets, a process which should transfer to their work with clients (Edwards, 2017, p. 262).

Ruby (2017) viewed the strengths-based approach grounded in humanism and positive psychology as having a positive influence on students in an internship course. Furthermore, its use in a group supervision format can be particularly influential in enhancing interns' personal strengths. In this setting, interns can receive corrective feedback with an understanding of the positive intent at its core. Ruby offered 12 questions as a strengths-based guide for establishing a fruitful dialogue in an internship course and facilitating interns' professional growth.

Recommendation #5: Offer Psychoeducational Resources for Colleagues and Trainees

If a strengths-based mindset is to be offered to trainees, counselor educators must commit to better understanding this approach. Gerstein (2006) noted a disconnect between counselor psychology training and the clinical implementation of a strengths-based approach. In his view, a gap exists between professional rhetoric embracing a strengths-based approach and academic training focusing on a deficit-based, psychopathological approach. Research on APA-accredited programs supports this point. In a survey of program directors, Nichols and Graves, Jr. (2018) found faculty support for the use of strength-based practices, yet also found that academic training was historically inconsistent with those beliefs. They concluded that collective faculties were simply not familiar with specific interventions in a strengths-based approach and were therefore ill-equipped to train students in this manner. To our knowledge, no similar studies have been conducted in counselor education, though it would be unsurprising to see similar results.

To this end, a collection of strengths-based resources for the department—to be used by counselor educators and students alike—would be helpful in promoting this philosophy. Recent books could be included in this repository, with at least four recent publications that could serve as a starting point for such a collection. Jones-Smith (2014) offered a book with the first theory of strengths-based therapy; Pomeroy and Garcia (2018) addressed this model from a social work perspective; Ward and Reuter (2011) focused on strength-centered counseling with an integration of postmodern approaches; and Edwards et al. (2017) edited an interdisciplinary book on strengths-based clinical practices. If this trend continues, more trainee resources will become available, which will enhance the development of their strengths-oriented skills.

Conclusion

Ultimately, counselor educators are charged with ensuring that the culture of their training programs aligns with the values espoused by the profession at large. We agree with Smith's (as cited in Kleist et al., 2017) stance that a strengths-based foundation in a

counselor education program is not signified by a PowerPoint or a lecture for students alone, as it represents a far more extensive construct than just strength development in trainees. The work of establishing a strengths-focused mindset also involves teaching students to foster strengths in their clients, as well as in other trainees, families, community members, and the university as a whole. This effort reflects teamwork and a dedication to fostering both wellness and hope. Counselor educators are crucial members in the process. In Smith's words, "…strengths-based work encourages students and counselor educators to take risks and be vulnerable together" (p. 276).

In addressing strength-building in schools, Lopez (2012) shared an excerpt from a story in which Br'er Rabbit experienced a sense of accomplishment in his running class, after which he said to himself, "I can't believe it. At school, I get to do what I do best" (p. 70). From a strengths-based perspective, one underlying question may be, "How can counselor educators foster a learning environment and a departmental culture where students say, 'Here I get to do my best?'" Lopez outlined two paths toward implementing strengths-based practices in education, the first of which involves an intentional shift from commitment to engagement in fostering student strengths. In this case, students can learn to develop their individual assets after taking a strengths-based instrument. The second path focuses on specific school-based efforts in promoting strength development ventures and initiatives. Lopez's examples, such as publicizing strength-fostering activities in school newsletters or posting strengths-oriented messages on university buses, could be modified and used by counseling departments.

All in all, a stronger and more conscientious emphasis on strengths in counselor education would represent a starting point for training counselors who are strengths-minded. In developing strength-centered professionals, counselor education programs can instill the skills necessary to elicit client strengths that are frequently shrouded by setbacks and misery (Ward & Reuter, 2011) and simultaneously prompt increased counselor wellness and self-efficacy. In this way, strengths-based training provides a win for students, practitioners, and clients alike.

References

Allan, B. A., Owens, R. L., & Douglass, R. P. (2019). Character strengths in counselors: Relations with meaningful work and burnout. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *27*(1), 151–166. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/1069072717748666

DeJong, P., & Berg, I. K. (1998). *Interviewing for solutions*. Brooks/Cole.

De Shazer, S., Berg, I. K., Lipchik, E., Nunnally, E., Molnar, A., Gingerich, W., & Weiner-Davis, M. (1986). Brief therapy: Focused solution development. *Family Process*, *25*(2), 207-221. https://doi:10.1111/j.1545-5300.1986.00207.x

Duncan, B. L. (2010). *On becoming a better therapist*. American Psychological Association.

Edwards, J. K., Young, A., Nikels, H. J. (Eds.) (2017). *Handbook of strengths-based clinical practices: Finding common factors*. Routledge.

Edwards, J. K. (2017). Strengths-based clinical supervision: An examination of how it works. In J. K. Edwards, A. Young, & H. J. Nikels (Eds.), *Handbook of strengths-based clinical practices* (pp. 253-274). Routledge.

Foster, T., Steen, L., O'Ryan, L., & Nelson, J. (2016). Examining how the Adlerian life tasks predict anxiety in first-year counseling students. *The Journal of Individual Psychology, 72*(2), 104-120. https://doi.org/10.1353/jip.2016.0009

Fouracres, A. J. S., & van Nieuwerburgh, C. (2020). The lived experience of self-identifying character strengths through coaching: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching & Mentoring*, *18*(1), 43–56. https://doi-org.proxy-iup.klnpa.org/10.24384/e0jp-9m61

Gerstein, L. H. (2006). Counseling psychology's commitment to strengths: Rhetoric or reality? *Counseling Psychologist*, *34*(2), 276-292. https://doi:10.1177/0011000005283518

Hamkins, S. (2014). *The art of narrative psychiatry*. Oxford University Press.

Harris, A. H. S., Thoresen, C. E., & Lopez, S. J. (2007). Integrating positive psychology into counseling: Why and (when appropriate) how. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *85*(1), 3–13. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556678.2007.tb00438.x

Henderson, N. (2007). Hard-wired to bounce back. In N. Henderson (Ed.), *Resiliency in action: Practical ideas for overcoming risks and building strengths in youth, families, and communities* (pp. 9-13). Resilience in Action, Inc.

Hood, C., & Carruthers, C. P. (2016). Supporting the development of a strengths-based narrative. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, *50*(2), 103–117. https://doi.org/10.18666/TRJ-2016-V50-I2-7307

Jones-Smith, E. (2014). *Strengths-based therapy.* SAGE Publications, Inc.

Jose, D., & Padmakumari, P. (2016). Psychotherapy for character strength development. *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology*, *7*(1), 119–123.

Johnson, W. B., Barnett, J. E., Elman, N. S., Forrest, L., Schwartz-Mette, R., & Kaslow, N. J. (2014). Preparing trainees for lifelong competence: Creating a communitarian training culture. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, *8*(4), 211–220. https://doi-org.proxy-iup.klnpa.org/10.1037/tep0000048

Kleist, D., Smith, J. C., & Kostohryz, K. (2017). Reflecting processes in counselor training: Iterating socially constructed strengths-based learnings within and beyond the classroom. In J. K. Edwards, A. Young, & H. J. Nikels (Eds.), *Handbook of strengths-based clinical practices: Finding common factors.* (pp. 275–293). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Linley, A. (2008). *Average to A+.* CAPP Press.

Lopez, S. J. (2012). Does your school build on strengths? *Phi Delta Kappan*, *93*(6), 70–71. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171209300617

Maslow, A. (1971). *The farther reaches of human nature*. The Viking Press.

Nichols, K., & Graves, S. L., Jr. (2018). Training in strength-based intervention and assessment methodologies in APA-accredited psychology programs. *Psychology in the Schools*, *55*(1), 93-100. https://doi:10.1002/pits.22090

Owens, R. L., Allan, B. A., & Flores, L. Y. (2019). The strengths-based inclusive theory of work. *Counseling Psychologist*, *47*(2), 222–265. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000019859538

Padesky, C. A., & Mooney, K. A. (2012). Strengths-based cognitive-behavioural therapy: A four-step model to build resilience. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, *19*(4), 283-290. https://doi:10.1002/cpp.1795

Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification.* American Psychological Association.

Pomeroy, E. C., & Garcia, R. B. (2018). *Direct practice skills for evidence-based social work.* Springer Publishing Company.

Rapp, A., Gowdy, E., Sullivan, W. P., & Wintersteen, R. (1988). Client outcome reporting: The status method. *Community Mental Health Journal*, *24*, 118-133. https://doi:10.1007/bf00756654

Rath, T. (2007). *Strengths finder 2.0.* Gallup Press.

Rettew, J. G., & Lopez, S. J. (2008). Discovering your strengths. In S. J. Lopez (Ed.), *Positive psychology: Exploring the best in people* (Vol. 1, pp. 1-21). Praeger Perspectives.

Rogers, C. R. (1961). *On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy*. Constable.

Ruby, J. (2017). Strengths-based internship supervision. In J. K. Edwards, A. Young, & H. J. Nikels (Eds.), *Handbook of strengths-based clinical practices* (pp. 294-304). Routledge.

Saleebey, D. (Ed.). (1992). *The strengths perspective in social work practice*. Longman.

Smith, E. J. (2006). The strength-based counseling model.: A paradigm shift in psychology *Counseling Psychologist*, *34*(1), 13–79. https://doi:10.1177/0011000005277018

Sparks, J. A., & Duncan, B. L. (2016). Client strengths and resources: Helping clients draw on what they already do best. In M. Cooper & W. Dryden (Eds.), *The handbook of pluralistic counselling and psychotherapy* (pp. 68-79). SAGE.

Stalling, J. E. (1994, September). *Towards a strength perspective in counseling*. Hays, KS: Fort Hays State University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 378 483).

Ward, C. C., & Reuter, T. (2011). *Strength-centered counseling*. SAGE.

Weick, A. (1983). Issues in overturning a medical model of social work practice. *Social Work*, *28*(6), 467-471. https://doi:10.1093/sw/28.6.467

Young, A., Edwards, J. K., Nikels, H. J., & Standefer, S. R. (2017). Strengths-based counseling 2.0. In J. K. Edwards, A. Young, & H. J. Nikels (Eds)., *Handbook of strengths-based clinical practices* (pp. 3-18). Routledge.

JPCA Test to Earn CE Credit

Note: Earn 2 Free Continuing Education Credits by reading selected articles in this issue. Read the articles identified below and answer 8 of the 10 questions correctly to earn 2 CE credit.

_____

Alternative Assessment Practices in Counselor Education Programs: A Suggested Framework (pp. 4-15)

1. Assessment:
- ☐ a. Should be intimately linked to a course or program's intended learning outcomes.
- ☐ b. Should always be implemented at the end of the semester.
- ☐ c. Should be used for certification and accreditation.
- ☐ d. Should be used for the sake of assigning grades.

2. Counselor educators can implement assessment tasks as:
- ☐ a. On-the-fly assessment
- ☐ b. Planned-for interaction assessment
- ☐ c. Curriculum-embedded assessment
- ☐ d. All of the above

3. Assessment results should be analyzed for:
- ☐ a. Grading
- ☐ b. Providing feedback
- ☐ c. Improve teaching, assessment, and instructional materials
- ☐ d. Indicating student counselors' shortcomings

4. Feedback can be given orally and/or in writing through:
- ☐ a. Self-reflection
- ☐ b. Peers
- ☐ c. Teacher
- ☐ d. All of the above

An Examination of Self-Reported White Allies: An Interpretative Qualitative Analysis (pp. 16-26)

5. Exposure to racism and discrimination can lead to symptoms of:
- ☐ a. Depression
- ☐ b. Anxiety
- ☐ c. Increased substance use.
- ☐ d. Poor self esteem.
- ☐ e. All of the above.

6. Joan, a white woman, identifies as an ally as she is married to a Black man. This is an example of what type of ally?
- ☐ a. Ally with altruistic motives
- ☐ b. Ally motivated by personal interests.
- ☐ c. Ally motivated by social justice.
- ☐ d. Ally motivated by recent racial injustice protests.
- ☐ e. Ally motivated by political ideology.

7. Themes associated with this study included:
- ☐ a. Allyship, Community Engagement, and Advocacy.
- ☐ b. Awareness, Values of Family of Origin, and Graduate Coursework.
- ☐ c. Advocacy, Acknowledgement, and Values of Family of Origin.
- ☐ d. Awareness, Advocacy, and Activism.
- ☐ e. Community Engagement, Family of Origin, and Exposure.

Five Ways to Embed Strengths in Counselor Training (pp. 27-33)

8. According to the article, individuals such as _____ and _____ deserve credit for building the foundation of the strengths-based approach.
- ☐ a. Perls and Roger
- ☐ b. Glasser and Ellis
- ☐ c. Rogers and Maslow
- ☐ d. Beck and Ellis

9. Which of the following premises would be most accurate according to the authors?
- ☐ a. Counseling is not a strengths-based profession
- ☐ b. Counseling is a strengths-based profession, yet counselor training can be addressing strengths to a greater extent
- ☐ c. Counseling is a strength-based profession that has roots in the early 1900s
- ☐ d. Counseling is not a strengths-based profession and should remain that way

10. Which of the following is not a recommendation proposed by the authors?
- ☐ a. Counselor training should mindfully teach students about strengths
- ☐ b. The cultures of counselor education programs can become more strengths-oriented
- ☐ c. The utilization of strengths can be integrated into internship courses
- ☐ d. A strengths-based approach should be taught secondarily to a deficits-based approach

---

☐   I certify that I have completed this test without receiving any help choosing the answers.

Feedback

Please rate the following items according to the following scale:

5 – Superior   4 – Above Average   3- Average   2 – Below Average   1 – Poor

	Superior	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
The authors were knowledgeable on the subject matter	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
The material that I received was beneficial	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
The content was relevant to my practice	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
This journal edition met my expectations as a mental health professional	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1
How would you rate the overall quality of the test?	☐5	☐4	☐3	☐2	☐1

Comments/Suggestions?

Instructions

Email: Complete the test, sign the form, and email to: **PCA.profdev@gmail.com.** Allow 2-4 weeks for processing.

For further assistance, please contact Kenya Johns, Professional Development Chair of the Pennsylvania Counseling Association at PCA.profdev@gmail.com

Mailing Information for Certificate

Please print clearly:

Name:
PCA Member Number:
Street address:
City: State: Zip:

Phone:
Email:

Signature:_____Date:

Guidelines for Authors

The *Journal of the Pennsylvania Counseling Association (JPCA)* is a professional, refereed journal dedicated to the study and development of the counseling profession. The Editor invites scholarly articles based on existing literature that address the interest, theory, research, and innovative programs and practices of professional counselors. Authors submitting manuscripts to the journal should not simultaneously submit them to another journal, nor should manuscripts have been published elsewhere in substantially similar form or with substantially similar content. All submissions are blind peer reviewed and authors should expect a decision regarding a manuscript within three months of acknowledgement of receipt. Following are guidelines for developing and submitting a manuscript. Any submissions that do not adhere to the following guidelines will be returned without review.

Specific Requirements

1. Manuscripts should not exceed 30 pages, including references.
2. Manuscripts should be typewritten, double-spaced (including references and extensive quotations) with 1" margins on all sides.
3. **Title Page:** Identify the title page with a running head. The title page should include title (not more than 80 characters), author, affiliation, and an author's note with contact information. Author's note should be formatted exactly as it appears in this example:

   > Author Name, Department of _____, University Name [or Company affiliation]. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Author Name, Department of _____, University, Street address, City, State, zip code (e-mail: xxxxx@xxxx.edu).

4. **Abstract:** Begin the abstract on a new page, and identify the abstract page with the running head and the number 2 typed in the upper right-hand header of the page. The abstract should not exceed 75 words.
5. **Keywords:** Keywords should follow the abstract on page 2 and are limited to 5 words.
6. **Text:** Begin the text on a page 3, and identify the text page with the running head and page number 3 typed in the upper right-hand header of the page. Type the title of the article centered at the top of the page and then type the text. Each subsequent page of the text should carry the running head and page number.
7. **Tables and Figures:** No more than 3 tables and 2 figures with each manuscript will be accepted. Do not embed tables or figures within the body of the manuscript. Each table or figure should be placed on a separate page following the reference list
8. **References:** References should follow the style detailed in the APA Publication Manual. Check all references for completeness, including the year, volume number, and pages for journal citations. Please be sure to include DOI numbers as necessary. Make sure that all references mentioned in the text are listed in the reference section and vice versa and that the spelling of author names and years are consistent.
9. **Footnotes or endnotes:** Do not use. Please incorporate any information within the body of the manuscript.
10. **Other:** Authors must also carefully follow APA Publication Manual guidelines for nondiscriminatory language regarding gender, sexual orientation, racial and ethnic identity, disabilities, and age. In addition, the terms counseling, counselor, and client are preferred, rather than their many synonyms.
11. In addition to the specific requirements of the JPCA, authors will adhere to all requirements of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.)*.
12. An electronic copy of the manuscript should be e-mailed to the editor: Dr. Terence Yee (pcajournal@gmail.com).

The Journal of the Pennsylvania Counseling Association (ISSN 1523-987X) is a biannual publication for professional counselors. It is an official, refereed branch journal of the American Counseling Association, Inc.