

Intern Self-Evaluation of Teaching

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This teaching experience has been essential to helping me understand and appreciate the challenges and benefits of doing online teaching. When I first considered teaching at the college, graduate, and doctoral level, I told myself that I would avoid online teaching because I felt that it would not provide the same type of learning experience that being in the classroom would. Though that is true, I discovered through co-teaching this class that it can still be a fulfilling and effective learning experience. I just needed to be open to finding new, creative teaching approaches that provide discussion, experiential exercises, constructive and positive feedback, and savvy use of technology. In teaching this course, I was able to identify three areas where I experienced personal and professional growth. This led me to set goals for how I can continue growing in those areas moving forward.

Personal and Professional Development

I believe that personal and professional development are linked in that the ways I develop in my personal life transitions over to my professional life as a counselor and educator, so I will use these terms interchangeably.

One of the ways I developed personally during this experience was being open to finding creative ways to teach in an online format. I never imagined myself wanting to teach courses online, but after taking this class, I see it as a strong possibility. It challenged me to find novel ways to teach the class content. It provided me with opportunities to engage the creative part of my mind, and I appreciated that challenge. This contributed to my professional life in that it moved me to “think outside the box” to more effectively enrich my teaching approach and enhance my student’s learning experiences.

The second way I developed personally is realizing how important it is for me to continue counseling students because my basic counseling skills will continue to be sharpened, and it will help me teach my students more effectively. I emphasized often that the therapeutic alliance is the most critical way to provide change in their client's lives. Additionally, this contributed to my professional life in that I can still practice my basic counseling skills, and consequently, this will provide me with more authority when I share those experiences with my students. I know I will have multiple examples, experiences, and insights to share when teaching the basic counseling skills to my students.

Lastly, I developed personally by being able to receive and accept positive feedback from my supervisor and students. I often share that I am my own worst critic so when others point out areas I need to improve on, I am likely already aware of them. However, my self-critique does not allow me to accept the positive reviews, and my strengths get lost in my over-analyzation of my weaknesses. In this class, whenever I asked for feedback, there were certain positive themes that continued to arise from what my supervisor and students shared. It made me reflect on why it was so difficult for me to believe their positive reviews. However, there was a point in the semester where I thought that maybe what they shared is was an area I was not giving attention to. Once I realized that, I started to receive and accept their compliments and encouragements. I began to see in myself the feedback they gave me, which provided me with a sense of new confidence in skills I had but did not value as much as they did. It was an eye-opening experience.

Goals for Continued Personal and Professional Development

The first goal I want to continue in my overall development is by seeking mentorship from professors who enjoy teaching online classes. I feel that people who enjoy what they do can provide great insights and different perspectives on how I can approach teaching in an online

format. In general, I strongly believe that mentorship is the best way to grow and learn in any field. My task to continue growing in this area is to have more conversations with people I admire who are also teaching online and ask as many questions about the pros and cons of it. Additionally, if I decide to teach online, I know who to turn to if I have more questions.

Secondly, I have also set a goal to commit to always be teaching and counseling at the same time. I think each profession significantly contributes to and enriches the other. I also noticed that the students appreciated that I had “real-life” experience working with clients. Thus, when I would speak about the basic counseling skills, they gave me credibility knowing about my background and experience.

My final goal will be to continually seek humility and honest self-reflection. I do not want to constantly be self-deprecating, but I do want to always be aware of areas that I need to grow in. I think the danger many counselors or counselor educators fall into is that the more time they have in their fields, it is easy to trust only in their experience and not on remembering what they did to get to that point. However, developing a healthy self-awareness and remaining humble can be a key buffer to not become prideful or overly self-deprecating.

Overall, this was an excellent experience and I am thankful for the multiple ways I developed personally, professionally, and even spiritually.