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## Article 29

### **An Integrative Teaching-Learning Model in Counselor Education**

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This classroom learning model is intended to serve as an operational map that reflects the continual interaction of dynamic learning styles of individual students, in a multicultural context as an effort to both incorporate and facilitate successful learning in counselor education. With more detailed knowledge of diversity within classrooms, educators may construct syllabi and classroom activities to support, challenge, and facilitate growth in the cognitive and moral development of students, while allowing various personalities and cultural perspectives to thrive in the classroom. The hope is that the classroom experience will carry over into other contexts beyond the classroom, such as the client-counselor relationship.

Given that there is a lack of models in the literature which address counselor educators' efforts to promote cognitive development, as noted by Granello (2000), this model is an attempt to merge current theories into a single, dynamic model for counselor educators to address the complexity of individuality and development. The key theories

that build the framework of the Integrative Teaching-Learning Model (ITLM) are Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive complexity, Kohlberg's ego development model, Kolb's learning styles, the Myers-Briggs personality theory, Perry's cognitive moral development model, and Phinney's ethnic identity development model. The combination of these cognitive, moral, ethnic, and personality constructs provide the model with a comprehensive framework to describe and account for individuality among students while fostering better learning. The developmental perspective of this model provides counselor educators an important benefit of highlighting the parallel process between the counseling student and the target of their study, the counseling client.

In addition to fostering improved learning in the classroom, this can be useful to students and instructors as they conceptualize the experience and worldview of clients, by giving a picture of how personal growth works. Particular attention is focused on the multicultural implication of this model given the need to meet the demands of the current global world community. The authors believe that the use of the ITLM map is an ideal method of demonstrating the dynamic interaction and complexity of this modern theoretical construct. The model's graphic depiction displays the complexity of developmental interactions within individuals in a learning environment.

Most counselor educators may be familiar with Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive complexity, Kohlberg's ego development model, Kolb's identified learning styles, Perry's cognitive moral development stages, and multicultural identity issues that can influence the learning of counseling students. However, in the context of the classroom, how does an instructor integrate each of these influences in determining the most effective curriculum for his/her students? Is the quieter African American female student not speaking up in class because in Bloom's Taxonomy she is still trying to gain knowledge rather than analyze the new information or is she feeling more withdrawn as a result of being a minority in a class of predominantly white students? Or perhaps this student is more of a dualist thinker (Perry's cognitive model) and tends to be more of a conformist under Kohlberg's definition of this stage of moral development. Many educators will make assumptions about learning based on their familiarity with these various models and perhaps inappropriately respond out of their own bias. The ITLM is designed to assist the counselor educator in integrating all of these influences with their students' learning and avoid the pitfalls of following one singular theory or model.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Multicultural Overview**

Some researchers studying the incorporation of multicultural themes in counselor preparation have found common ground on three fundamental issues: that recent changes in the global community have necessitated heightened awareness regarding service delivery, that the counseling profession as a whole has not adequately engaged marginalized populations in the clinical realm, and that there needs to be an aggressive effort on the part of counselor educators to address the aforementioned trends in the preparation of future counselors (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999; Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998; Ridley, Mendoza, Kanitz, Angermeier & Zenk, 1994; Weinrach & Thomas, 1996).

Counseling, as a discipline, continues to face several fundamental challenges related to becoming more inclusive of different cultural views (Ridley et al., 1994;

Weinrach & Thomas, 1996). Among those challenges is the dilemma of defining cultural sensitivity to any degree of consensus. There does not appear to be any definite indication as to what becoming “culturally sensitive” really means. Hence, professionals in our field often approach therapeutic relationships with cultural minorities with some degree of ambiguity and trepidation.

As our field seeks to become more inclusive of all members of the global community, competent counselor educators would do well to position themselves to acknowledge culturally different worldviews (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999; Pedersen, 1990). Less than fifty years removed from the Civil Rights Movement, race and ethnicity are still very delicate topics among scholars and clinicians (Weinrach & Thomas, 1996). However, ethical guidelines of our profession require that we strive to aggressively include all marginalized populations in our dialogue of inclusion (Ridley et al., 1994). Accordingly, counselor educators, particularly those representing marginalized groups, are encouraged to engage in active involvement related to making counseling more assessable and appropriate (Pedersen, 1990; Weinrach & Thomas, 1996).

For years a pervasive lack of cultural sensitivity in the counseling profession has been cited as being a major reason many ethnic minorities do not fully engage in therapeutic relationships (Ridley et al., 1994). Researchers may do well to continue with current trends of evaluating various cultures within their natural cultural context, as opposed to continuing the age old practice of cross-cultural comparison. There is a familiar refrain in current counseling literature urging the discipline toward advocacy. Much of the effort required to bring about wide-range change toward increased inclusion in our field will be undertaken by clinicians and educators, as opposed to administrators and legislators. There are lessons to be learned from the Civil Rights Movement regarding the power that can be generated by a determined and focused group of people, and staying committed to a worthy cause when the situation appears bleak. Going forward, counselor educators will be continually challenged to advocate for marginalized groups and increased inclusion among our ranks. In integrating cognitive development models with personality theory, moral development models, and educational taxonomy, we believe we have created an operational map that addresses multicultural appreciation and awareness within the teaching-learning model, in addition to accommodating diversity within the classroom.

### **Ethnic Identity Development**

Teaching through an integrated model enables recognition and accommodation of the various individual factors that interplay within the classroom, thereby addressing the multitude of these ethnic, cognitive, moral, and personality factors. With this broad range of teaching and learning accommodation, the openness that is facilitated in the classroom stimulates students and enables open dialogue and experience, thus creating multicultural awareness and exchange. Phinney (1992) designed an ethnic identity model that incorporates awareness of both dominant, or white, and non-dominant cultural group attitudes. Research points to the developmental nature of ethnic identity (Phinney, Ferguson, & Tate, 1997). Although earlier research shows conflict between strong cultural identity and outside group acceptance, more current literature reveals that ethnic identity enhances positive attitudes towards other cultural groups (Ellis, 2004). It seems imperative to teach and learn within a multiethnic vantage point if we are to instill

multicultural awareness and sensitivity in counselors.

Viewing ethnic identity as developmental in nature and based upon Phinney's work, the presented model overlays ethnic identity development with moral and cognitive development, as we see this integration as necessary to fully address and enhance individual learning. By focusing on ethnic identity development within individual students, they are challenged to become aware of their own cultural context, and then to relate to other cultural contexts. This model intends to explore multicultural contexts in the continued effort to understand and respect all cultures. Focusing on ethnic identity development in students may help counselor trainees translate their experience of identity formation into their own work with diverse clients.

### **Cognitive Development and Bloom's Taxonomy**

Granello (2000) has drawn attention to the importance of cognitive development for counseling students and trainees, specifically recognizing a task of the counselor educator as facilitating the development of cognitive complexity in the counseling student. The focus on this instructional calling is supported by several studies demonstrating that higher levels of cognitive complexity in counseling students are associated with a variety of benefits for both students and clients, including better case conceptualization, more accurate clinical hypotheses, increased trainee confidence, and decreased trainee anxiety (Granello, 2000). There is a lack of models in the literature designed to assist counselor educators in the endeavor of promoting cognitive development. There is literature suggesting Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives as a systematic mechanism that can be helpful in both teaching and learning how to improve cognitive complexity specifically in student writing and clinical work (Granello, 2000, 2001).

The use of Bloom's Taxonomy in conceptualizing levels of student cognitive development provides educators with a step-by step picture of the student's developmental journey through a hierarchy of cognitive complexity with an end goal of becoming dynamic critical thinkers. Each level of the model is intended to build upon the previous one, moving learners from basic knowledge up through comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and finally to thoughtful and intentional evaluation of information, its sources, and its implications for self and others. Granello (2000) posits that educators can use Bloom's model to help students recognize the limitations in their thinking, give them specific objectives for improvement, and guide their efforts in reaching those objectives. The implied suggestion for intervention consists of identifying a student's general level of cognitive complexity regarding a certain topic or concept based on the model, and then assisting the student in moving to the next highest level. Educators can also apply the model more broadly by starting at lower levels early on in courses, when presenting new material, or when working with newer students, and then moving up the hierarchy appropriately. Granello (2000) acknowledges that students and their work, either written or oral, may not be absolutely categorized at one specific level or another, but goes on to point out that specific or exclusive categorization is not necessary to promote students' overall potential for greater cognitive development.

The student-centered focus is a clear advantage to this approach for counselor education. The taxonomy levels give educators a versatile tool in tailoring instruction to the specific needs of students. Using the framework as a means of connecting with

students can facilitate more effective communication and reduced frustration on the part of both students and faculty (Granello, 2001). Perhaps most helpful is the recognition that cognitive complexity is something that can and should be taught and does not exist intrinsically on its own or develop in proportion to pure effort on the part of students. Ultimately, increasing the ability of counselor educators to successfully facilitate the development of cognitive complexity in counselor trainees will contribute to the profession as a whole through advancing the depth of writing, research, and clinical skill in emerging generations of counselors.

Although the application of Bloom's Taxonomy presents potential benefits to counselor educators and trainees, the model is not a comprehensive one. It has been suggested that Bloom's Taxonomy can assist educators in operationalizing the path of development towards cognitive complexity (Granello 2000, 2001). However, this model does not explain the unique vehicle through which individual students accomplish this journey. A more comprehensive model is needed to account for how students make sense of their learning experiences through individual learning styles and their perception of the interaction between personal experience and cognitive process.

### **Moral Development**

In the realm of counselor education, it is relevant to consider moral development as well as cognitive development. Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development continue to have tremendous utility and impact for the fields of counseling and counselor education. When Kohlberg first wrote his stage theory, he brought an increased complexity to the field of developmental psychology. In his theory of moral development, he outlined three categories of development: preconventional morality, conventional morality, and postconventional morality (Kohlberg, 1975). Each of these three categories is further divided into two to create the six stages. A person who progresses through these stages moves from a concept of morality based on external authority that is absolute and enforced by punishment, to a morality that is defined by allegiance to universal principles of justice that supersede the rule of law.

Kohlberg (1975) makes a case for using his developmental model to create a system of "moral education" for students. He envisions using classroom techniques and specific interventions to foster the student's moral growth in the school setting. He argues that his stage model does not teach particular values; rather, it trains people to make increasingly higher level moral decisions in the context of their own beliefs and preferences (Kohlberg, 1975). In a counselor education program, it is extremely important to nurture and encourage the development of moral decision-making while imparting content-based knowledge without undermining or overriding cultural values.

Hayes (1994) further develops the many implications of Kohlberg's theory for the counseling profession and counselor education. He focuses attention on seven basic views of Kohlberg's that have particular relevance for counselors. These points stress the importance of subjective context, the continual process of making new meaning, and the importance of group interactions for growth-oriented activities. All of these themes have important ramifications for the process of educating counselors as well as for counselor-client interactions.

Although there have been some minor criticisms of his work, Kohlberg continues to command respect for the contributions made to the understanding of human

development. The most formidable of Kohlberg's detractors has been Carol Gilligan, who contends that Kohlberg's theories contain gender bias and an over emphasis on justice as opposed to a more feminine concern of care (Crain, 1985). This is an important area for further research and discussion. Counselor educators can remain diligent about gender differences and the need to affirm both "masculine" and "feminine" ways of thinking and being in the world by steadfast research and constant awareness.

In 1970, William Perry proposed a cognitive development model, where individuals move through nine stages of intellectual and moral development. This model can be grouped into four stages: dualism, multiplicity, relativism, and commitment. Unlike Kohlberg, this scheme describes development as generally an irreversible sequence of stages where individuals perceive knowledge starting from a simplistic stage toward a pluralistic view (Widdick, 1977). While movement, for example, from dualistic to relativistic thinking in this model may be considered a positive by-product, the purpose of our teaching model is to assist in understanding and accepting a student's experiences and frame of thinking. As a result, we recognize this as another form of diversity in the classroom. Both different and similar viewpoints and experiences can build levels of comfort and confidence with a sense of community and are likely to facilitate challenging exchanges or even confrontation (Widdick, 1977). A small group discussion with two students who are dualistic thinkers and two who are relativistic, allows students to struggle together. This mismatch is yet another example of how diversity can be used to promote thinking and movement in different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

### **Student Learning Styles**

Any comprehensive consideration of teaching strategy needs to address the tremendously influential work of David Kolb, who published his Learning Style Inventory in 1976. Kolb's inventory, which looked at the differing ways in which students learn experientially, measures all learners along two different axes. Along one axis, the perception dimension, Kolb's inventory places a learner's preference somewhere along a continuum from concrete experience to abstract conceptualization. Along the second axis, the processing dimension, a learner's style is measured for a preference for active experimentation or reflective observation. By combining the relative strengths found along these two axes, a learner is then categorized as preferring one of four learning styles: diverger, assimilator, converger, or accommodator.

In an article written specifically for counselors, George Atkinson (1991) addresses the reliability and usefulness of Kolb's learning model, both in its original form and as it was revised in 1985. Citing several earlier articles, Atkinson touches on design problems, such as the interdependent scoring method, the forced choice format, and the bipolar factors. Moving on to reliability and validity, Atkinson again cites numerous previous articles that elaborate on the weaknesses within the Kolb model. Atkinson summarizes that the internal consistency is "modest" and the stability is weak. In various studies that are cited (Atkinson, 1991), there proved to be no consistent predictive value of the Learning Style Inventory. In fact, most reported support for Kolb's instrument comes from "anecdotal" data and from educators engaged in designing educational strategies (Atkinson, 1991). Despite these statistical weaknesses, Kolb's learning styles continue to remind educators that students bring different learning styles to the classroom. A teacher who is interested in reaching the greatest number of students will

want to utilize different approaches described by Kolb to accommodate as many students as possible.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is one of the most well researched and widely used personality inventories in research and practice (Isaken, Lauer, & Wilson, 2003; McClanaghan, 2000). The MBTI indicates four different dichotomous scales, or type preferences: Introversion vs. Extraversion, Sensing vs. Intuition, Thinking vs. Feeling, and Judging vs. Perceiving. A working knowledge of this instrument is critical in better understanding students' character and styles of learning. Educators should consider and conceptualize the range of various styles and preferences to better design their courses and guide classroom activities. Specifically, a variety of teaching methods to create levels of comfort and challenge are recommended to intentionally reach out to a diverse group of individual learners. A balance of both traditional lecture and small group discussion within one class activity may provide introverts and extraverts a level of comfort as well as challenge for their respective characteristic. In the same class, while some students may receive information with ease, other may need a chance to exercise and utilize the content in a discussion or debate format. Simply stated, personality type is a factor to be taken into consideration to better reach different types of learners.

### **The Integrative Teaching-Learning Model (ITLM)**

The proposed ITLM (Figure 1) demonstrates the stages of cognitive development by illustrating the step-like qualities of progression from one stage to the next. The circular nature of these stages, as students progress, and sometimes digress, through classroom challenges and support, is shown by the cycle movement arrows. Personality interactions are continually interactive, and therefore show constant movement on the model. The multicultural aspects are presented as an overlay, or backdrop, as the aspect of individual ethnic context permeates, and indeed enables, the learning environment. Students, coming from a variety of backgrounds and developmental ranges, are encouraged to engage in multiple activities as individuals and in groups to impact one another. The desired outcome is movement and shift for each student and for the class as a whole, not to categorically label students individually. The ITLM is designed to be constructivist in that its design is to engage students with each other to challenge, support and stimulate one another's movement across critical thinking and moral development, regardless of starting point, learning style preference, or personality. The map (Figure 1) is a graphic depiction of individual movement and continuous flow through these developmental cycles.

### **Applying the ITLM in Counselor Education**

Applying the ITLM to counselor education classrooms enables instructors to approach individual students at their most pivotal developmental points. Rather than assume, for example, that the quieter African American female is struggling due to issues related to ethnic identity development, this model enables the instructor to also address cognition, moral development, or learning style and personality preference, such that the student can experience the learning through differing approaches. The instructor assumes that the course itself serves as catalytic dissonance for all of these areas and provides material and discussion as well as methods that addresses multicultural, moral, cognitive,

personality development, and accommodates for varying learning styles. The integrative effects of each of these realms may be impacting this student. So the counselor educator must integrate all realms into the learning process. ITLM provides an encounter for each student to realize and critically assess the developmental issue that is most salient for them during the course of the particular class.

Instructors apply the ITLM by operating from within each of the model's theories throughout the course. For example, to challenge and support ethnic identity and moral development, course content would include topically appropriate examples of a range of world views and ethical dilemmas within classroom processing. A case study approach that includes culturally diverse issues and morally challenging dilemmas, along with means of responding to the case study in open discussion or through individual journal writing assignments is an example of using the ITLM in the classroom. Small group projects that highlight the various theories, open discussion with Socratic questioning that targets the various theories, as well as structured research papers that require students to integrate Kohlberg, Kolb, and multicultural and ethnic issues are all examples of assignments that can apply the ITLM to learning. Cognitive and learning style differences can be addressed by establishing a variety of opportunities for students to grasp and apply content, such as through technique demonstrations, role-plays, journal writing, research assignments, and mixed-format examinations. Activities would also be designed to draw out the range of personality types within the class, e.g. providing introverts the opportunity to participate and minimizing the dominance of extroverts. A single class would not necessarily address each developmental need, however, the ITLM modeled course would integrate developmental needs collectively over time through assortment of activity.

## **Conclusion**

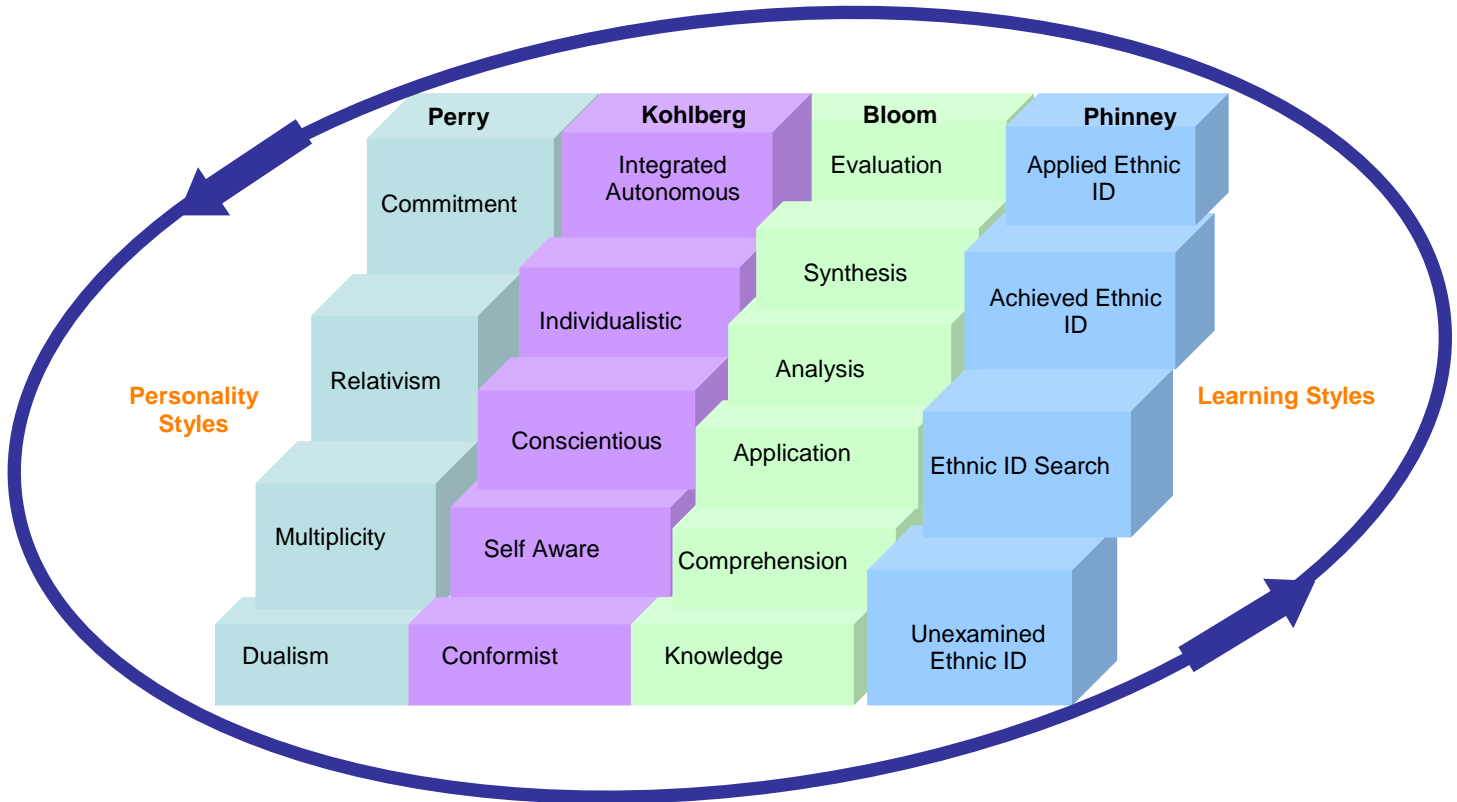
Instructors should use these considerations as tools to drive learning and cognitive development. In the case of our learning model, reaching different character styles through the MBTI, and cognitive styles through Kolb, Kohlberg, and Perry, can aid in pushing students beyond current levels of comfort and cognitive complexity. In the end, considering a multitude of factors through combining these individual models helps drive students towards another step in critical thinking, as with Bloom's Taxonomy. "We might consider teaching to 'merely' be the setting up of conditions for the learner to know through a cycling and recycling of experience, reflection, and abstract conceptualization" (McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2000). Providing exposure to new ideas and engaging differences is a primary objective. In multicultural counselor education, instructors and educators can intentionally and thoughtfully design an atmosphere to further cognitive growth in students, while challenging students to stretch, progress, and overall become better learners and thinkers.

This model supports a constructivist approach to counselor education by assisting educators in tailoring instruction to individual student development needs. The ITLM assists educators in visualizing the dynamics of each student within the classroom, and to thereby structure courses with attention to creating an atmosphere conducive to construction of individual knowledge, rather than delivery of information. Given the constructivist nature of the model, the authors believe it can be applicable across all



components of counselor education, from theory and practice courses, to practicum, internship, and supervision experiences.

*Graph 1. The Integrated Teaching-Learning Model*



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