Getting Everybody Involved: 
A Collaborative Training Approach 
for Counselors and Educators

Jeremy R. Sullivan 
Peggy P. H. Hsieh 
Norma S. Guerra 
Christine A. Lumadue 
Maritza Lebrón-Striker

ABSTRACT. This paper describes a creative approach for training counselor and counselor educators that provides collaborative interactions among students and faculty in several university training programs. Structured around a problem-solving activity and self-reflection questionnaires, undergraduate teachers-in-training were given an opportunity to receive one-to-one consultative counseling from the master’s level counselors-in-training, who in turn received structured problem-solving supervision from the doctoral level students. Finally, the doctoral level students received faculty support to facilitate the development of their supervisory skills. The goal of this training approach is to provide students at all three levels with experiences similar to those they

Jeremy R. Sullivan, Peggy P. H. Hsieh, and Norma S. Guerra are Assistant Professors, and Christine A. Lumadue, is Clinical Director at The University of Texas at San Antonio, Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Adult and Higher Education. Maritza Lebrón-Striker is a doctoral student in Counselor Education and Supervision at The University of Texas at San Antonio.

Address correspondence to: Jeremy R. Sullivan, University of Texas at San Antonio, CEPAHE, 501 West Durango Boulevard, San Antonio, TX 78207-4415 (E-mail: jeremy.sullivan@utsa.edu).

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Consistent with the American Counseling Association's *Code of Ethics* (ACA, 2005) and the accreditation standards promulgated by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2001), training in counseling should include a combination of coursework and supervised clinical experiences. Other mental health and educational organizations and accrediting bodies such as the American Psychological Association (APA, 2005), National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2000), and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2006) incorporate similar ideas into their training standards, with importance placed on supervised practicum experiences in which trainees have opportunities to collaborate with others and apply what they have learned in the classroom into practice. Presented is a description of a practical systematic approach to counselor education through the use of a structured problem-solving activity. Counselors-in-training gain practical experiences that meet the training guidelines set forth by various organizations as they work with pre-service teachers, with benefits to both the counseling and teacher education programs.

The goal of this article is to provide readers with a description of a systematic approach to counseling and supervision in order to illustrate the benefits and practicality of this model. With this approach, undergraduate participants were provided with supportive counseling services while graduate students were offered the opportunity to use their skills acquired in the classroom to counsel and supervise. This collaboration between the three groups of students represents an innovative way to develop skills within the graduate students, while introducing to undergraduate teachers-in-training the importance of support-seeking and the significant role of mental wellness in their personal and professional lives.
DESCRIPTION OF THE APPROACH

This creative training approach was implemented at a large (over 28,000 students) Hispanic-serving institution in the southwest United States. Three groups of students participated in the collaboration, which occurred over the course of an academic semester. The first group included undergraduate students in a teacher preparation program, enrolled in an introductory Educational Psychology course. The second group included graduate students in a master’s program in Counseling. These students had completed a Counseling Skills course and were enrolled in a Counseling Practicum course at the time of the study, which was designed to provide further skill development. Finally, the third group included doctoral students in the department’s Counselor Education and Supervision program. These students were concurrently enrolled in a Counseling Supervision course in which they were expected to develop their supervisory skills. The following sections describe the training approach within the context of meeting curriculum-related goals for each group of students.

Undergraduate Curricular Goals

With their consent, undergraduate teachers-in-training were invited to participate in a series of counseling sessions focused on problem-solving in their everyday lives; sessions were provided by master’s level counselors-in-training. The participating undergraduates were fully informed of the nature of the counseling sessions and what their participation would entail, and they were informed that they could withdraw from research participation at any time. Further, the undergraduates were informed of the limits of confidentiality during the process of gaining informed consent for the counseling services. Once the process began, when an undergraduate revealed major impairment or made threats of potential self-harm, the counselors-in-training consulted with their supervisors and referred the student to the appropriate agencies, such as the university counseling center or police department, depending on the type and degree of impairment or threat. Because all sessions were conducted in the Community Family Life Center (described below), faculty or doctoral student supervisors were always on hand to provide immediate support to the counselors-in-training. In order to maintain confidentiality, the counselors-in-training did not share any information about the undergraduates (or the content of their counseling sessions) to their professors or teacher education program. Thus, at no
time did course instructors have access to information revealed by the undergraduates during their counseling sessions.

From the undergraduate perspective, the intended goal for participation in this experience was not only to introduce the importance of support-seeking and mental wellness in their personal and professional lives, but also to facilitate the application of the theoretical concepts discussed in their Educational Psychology course (e.g., awareness of the self as a learner, goal-setting, self-monitoring and self-evaluating skills, as well as the monitoring of their motivation for school), to extend the application to their own lives as students, and to prepare them to collaborate and consult with others using a problem-solving template. As future educators, the training was also designed to give students an understanding of the importance of consulting with a counselor and using resources when faced with challenges in the schools, or in their everyday lives.

**Master's Program Curricular Goals**

For the master's students, participation was also a voluntary component of their training as counselors. Students were encouraged to participate as a way to receive the number of direct contact hours required by their practicum course, and as a way of further developing their counseling skills in using a structured problem-solving model. The experience also offered additional supervision provided by the doctoral students and opportunities for doctoral students to scaffold the master's students' counseling techniques using a systematic approach. The structure provided both the masters and doctoral students support for the self-reflection and honing of counseling skills.

**Doctoral Program Curricular Goals**

Similarly, the doctoral students were encouraged to participate in order to gain experience with supervising counselors-in-training using the structured problem-solving model, and as a way to supplement their previous coursework and training in supervision. To ensure the quality of the counseling supervision process, doctoral students were supervised by university faculty in the program.

**Setting and Procedure**

The Community Family Life Center (CFLC) is a university-based, clinical training facility for the Counseling Program. The facility is lo-
located on-campus, operated by the department, and used for training purposes by both master’s and doctoral level students. Its mission supports the program through in-house clinical opportunities while offering free mental health services to the community, providing facilities for role plays and videotaping, and providing opportunities for supervision of practicum students, including live supervision (Carlozzi, Romans, Boswell, Ferguson, & Whisenhunt, 1997).

Master’s and doctoral students completed a training session on the LIBRE structured problem-solving model (Guerra, 2001) to familiarize them with this specific counseling approach. This training uses procedures similar to those used within the microcounseling paradigm (Ivey, 1971) including modeling by the researchers followed by opportunities to practice using the model with one another in small groups, while the researchers observed and provided feedback to the students. A meta-analysis conducted by Baker and Daniels (1989) suggested that this microcounseling paradigm is an effective means of teaching counseling skills to counselors-in-training.

Following the training sessions, each participating undergraduate student was assigned to a master’s level counselor-in-training, and each participating master’s student was matched with a doctoral student as his/her supervisor. The master’s students met individually with their undergraduate students a minimum of four times over the course of the semester; sessions typically lasted from 45 to 60 minutes. Sessions were first scheduled at the beginning of the semester so that a baseline of students’ motivation, stress, coping strategies, and engagement could be identified, then the three additional sessions were scheduled according to the exam schedule in the Educational Psychology course. Under the supposition that exam times would be stressful for the undergraduate students, it was hoped that they would appreciate talking to the counselors-in-training and articulate through the LIBRE problem-solving model how they dealt with their challenges during times of stress.

During the multilevel sessions, the counselors-in-training completed the LIBRE Stick Figure, a systematic approach to counseling, with their undergraduate students, in addition to other measures (all described below). All sessions were videotaped and took place in the CFLC, with supervision provided by faculty in the department. Doctoral students conducted supervision sessions with their master’s students following each meeting with their undergraduate students. This provided master’s students with guidance and feedback, not only with regard to implementation of the LIBRE problem-solving model, but also related to
skills and qualities that are thought to be associated with being an effective counselor (e.g., Wheeler, 2000). Similarly, the doctoral level students met with the program faculty to discuss their supervisory skill set. The multilevel facet of the training was incorporated in the monitoring of participants' stress, coping strategies, self-beliefs, and problem-solving across the course of the semester.

Research suggests that problem-solving (e.g., identifying the problem, brainstorming potential solutions, setting goals) and coping skills are associated with positive outcomes for various client populations (e.g., Balkin & Roland, 2007; Hess & Copeland, 2001; Recklitis & Noam, 1999). Thus, it was important to help our participants identify strategies to solve problems and cope with stress. This study uses the LIBRE Model (described below) to assist clients in the process of identifying a pressing issue by incorporating useful steps such as those associated with a problem-solving and goal-setting process.

**MEASURES USED IN THE TRAINING APPROACH**

The measures used in this project are briefly described below. The descriptions are not intended to provide critical evaluations of the measures' psychometric properties; rather, the intent is to illustrate how the problem-solving activity and measures were designed to reflect course content. That is, these measures are tied to the content of the undergraduate course, where students reflect on concepts and employ skills related to educational psychology, such as motivation, self-efficacy, goal-setting, self-regulation, collaboration, and problem-solving. Thus, completion of these measures was meant to facilitate students' thinking about the application of these psychological concepts to their own academic and personal lives. Further, completion of the measures by all three groups allowed for examination of differences in these constructs based on level of training (undergraduate, master's, and doctoral groups). The authors were also interested in monitoring students' changes in these constructs over time. The Appendix provides a graphic representation of the LIBRE Stick Figure; the remaining measures described below can be obtained by contacting the authors.

**LIBRE Model and LIBRE Stick Figure**

The LIBRE Model was designed as a social cognitive problem-solving counseling strategy. The word "LIBRE," which means free in Span-
ish, is the acronym for this process and describes the “freedom” resulting from the self-decided solutions to self-selected challenges individuals experience in life. Each letter of the acronym represents a counselor prompt: Listen to the narrative, Identify the presenting issue, Brainstorm possible solutions, Reality test to check all generated options, and Encourage as a plan is developed (Guerra, 2001, 2006, 2007). The LIBRE model strategy is to enhance focus and support client ownership of both the goal-setting and problem-solving process. The counselor has an important role of presenting the LIBRE stick figure and guiding the client in filling out the stick figure prompts, similar to the process of a regular counseling session with the addition of using of a structured visual model. This is achieved by helping the client to identify a pressing issue, monitor the progress of finding and implementing realistic strategies using active listening and open-ended prompts, and using counseling skills to provide encouragement in participation. The time required for the LIBRE process and required structure and encouragement will depend on clients’ willingness to work on their identified pressing issue, and their eagerness in developing strategic plans to tackle their challenges.

As a useful adjunct to the strategy, the LIBRE Model Stick Figure Tool (Guerra, 2005) was developed as a companion organizer to guide and record client responses (Guerra, 2001, 2006, 2007). The stick figure provides a visual reference to guide the counseling process and as a record which can serve as a “cue” to performance (see Appendix). Clinical experience suggests that the tool provides useful information concerning the client’s engagement style (Guerra, 2007). The constructs developed to explain these engagement styles refer to the individual’s approach to attention, namely initial and sustained attention. Approaches based on initial and sustained attention appear to offer patterns of self-in-social-context and suggest likelihood of perseverance to plan, approach to problem-solving, extent and manner of self-awareness, and a basic “style” of expression related to problem management. LIBRE practitioners have also reported discerning distinct patterns of underlying intentionality with respect to the presenting problem(s) in context. These observations may provide predictive information related to invested willingness to change. The advantages of the availability of a wide range of hypotheses generated from a dynamic interaction rather than static (e.g., questionnaire) measures concerning client awareness, resources, intentionality, style of expression, and engagement are readily apparent and include culturally appropriate and contextual considerations.
Using the LIBRE approach, these individual engagement styles are usually identifiable within a short period of time. Limiting a decision to observational data may be unduly influenced by inaccurate cultural or contextual assumptions based on nomothetic rather than ideographic information. With the LIBRE structured problem-solving dialogue, counselors have a consistent frame of reference and can depend on information that is supplied by the client participating in the problem-solving process. As a result, the observant facilitator is able to identify key motives, values, culture, experiences, and level of confidence (self and situational) matched to the client’s self-defined worldview.

It is important to note that the LIBRE Model and Stick Figure instrument were used to structure both (a) the problem-solving counseling sessions with the undergraduate and master’s students, and (b) the supervision sessions with the master’s and doctoral students. Just as the master’s students used the model to help their undergraduates identify concerns and set goals during counseling, the doctoral students used the model to help their master’s students identify concerns and set goals during supervision.

**Problem-Solving Attribution Scale (PAS)**

Fifteen questions were included on this inventory. Participants first rated how satisfied they were with the action plan, the counseling session, or the counseling supervision, depending on their affiliated group. Participants were then asked to rate the degree to which they believed the outcome was due to their ability, effort, difficulty of the problem, luck, how the problem was identified, how the questions were initiated, how the situation was defined, how the plan was created, how the problem was analyzed, and how the session was summarized. The questions on this measure were tailored to the LIBRE Model problem-solving activity.

**Causal Dimension Scale (CDS-II)**

This self-report instrument, designed to measure causal attributions for performance, was developed by McAuley, Duncan, and Russell (1992). Due to the needs of this study, the questionnaire was modified so that each group of participants rated their opinions accordingly. Undergraduate students rated based on their perceptions about the causes of the results of the action plan during the counseling session. Master’s level students rated based on their perceptions about the causes of their
performance in the counseling session. Doctoral students rated based on their perceptions about the causes of their performance in the supervision session. The questionnaire contains 12 items assessing the four subscales of locus of causality, stability, personal control, and external control that are each scored on a 5-point scale.

**Counseling and Supervising Self-Efficacy Scale (CSSS)**

This scale was developed specifically for this study because there are no available scales that assess both counseling and supervision self-efficacy. This is a 7-item, 5-point Likert scale that asks students to rate the extent to which they feel confident that their training is adequate for them to either counsel or supervise.

**Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation Problem-Solving Scale (SSPS)**

This is another scale that was developed for this study. On a 5-point Likert scale, undergraduate and graduate students were asked to rate their self-efficacy level for problem-solving based on the steps that they have to take using the LIBRE Model. Items related to self-regulation in problem-solving ask students to rate their awareness and their actions when dealing with a problem or concern. The SSPS includes 25 items.

**Achievement Goal Orientation Inventory**

This 18-item inventory was developed by Elliot and Church (1997), and includes three subscales: mastery (e.g., I want to learn as much as possible while in college), performance-approach (e.g., It is important to me to do better than the other students), and performance-avoidance goals (e.g., I often think to myself, “What if I do badly in college?”). For each item, students were asked to rate whether they agree or disagree with the statements using a 5-point Likert scale.

**Evaluation of Master’s Students**

A 13-item questionnaire was given to the doctoral students as a way of evaluating the counselors-in-training that they were supervising. Questions evaluated master’s level students’ questioning techniques, ability to establish rapport, skills in reflecting and summarizing, and ability to implement the problem-solving activity with integrity.
Coping Strategies Scale

The Coping Strategies Scale (CSS) is an experimental measure of the specific coping strategies and problem-solving skills that students employ when faced with academic stressors. Each of the 56 items lists a specific coping strategy, which is then followed by: How often do you use this strategy? (1 = Never, 2 = Hardly Ever, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Almost Always). The four scales on the CSS include Approach (indicating that the individual is willing to approach the issue), Avoidance (indicating that the individual avoids or ignores the problem), Social Support (indicating one’s willingness to seek advice through family and friends), and Positive Self-Talk (indicating a tendency to cope by making positive self-statements).

Sources of Stress Scale

The Sources of Stress Scale was developed specifically for this study, in order to help students explore the stressors they experience in their everyday lives while attending college. The scale defines stress and gives examples of stressors in different areas. Students list their five most common day-to-day stressors in order of frequency and then rate how stressful each of these stressors are on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not Very Stressful) to 5 (Extremely Stressful).

BENEFITS OF THE APPROACH

This training approach holds distinct benefits across the three levels of involvement, including the undergraduate teachers-in-training, master’s level counseling students, and doctoral level counselor education and supervision students. The discussion that follows is based on feedback provided by the student participants, in the form of comments made on evaluation forms completed at the end of the semester. A few selected sample comments are used to illustrate the participants’ feedback. This discussion also is based on the faculty’s perceptions of the programmatic benefits of this training approach.

Undergraduate Students

The training approach presented in the current paper provides undergraduate teachers-in-training with a structured problem-solving pro-
cess, which not only can help them work through current personal and academic problems, but also can serve to help them recognize the importance of seeking support when faced with problems, challenges, and stressors in their future teaching roles. We believe this approach presents an opportunity to fill a void in the current teacher education curriculum, by proactively helping teachers-in-training meet psychosocial needs that have traditionally received little attention. Indeed, the experience may allow teachers-in-training to identify and address problems which might otherwise go unaddressed, escalate, and impede the students’ learning and future effectiveness as a teacher. Further, this early experience working with mental health professionals while still in school may create more favorable perceptions towards mental health professionals in the schools (e.g., school counselors, school psychologists). The ability and willingness to create working relationships with these professionals will be vital to teachers’ success given their increasingly multiple roles and functions in the schools (e.g., communicating effectively with parents, gathering academic and behavioral data from students, working as a member of special education teams).

In general, the undergraduates reported that they appreciated the opportunity to meet with the counselors-in-training, and felt that the problem-solving activity using the LIBRE Model was beneficial to them. In fact, some of the undergraduate students surveyed requested additional sessions at the end of the semester when they felt the pressure of final exams approaching. It makes intuitive sense that in these undergraduate class sections that may include up to 60 students, the students are likely to appreciate the individual attention that this experience provides. Some of the specific comments made by the students include: “It made me think about things that were bothering me,” “I now know what I have to get done,” and “It helped me realize what I need to focus on.” Some students found the experience to be challenging, as demonstrated by the following: “I felt that it was challenging because it forced me to write things down to evaluate and come up with a specific goal,” “It was challenging because you have to share with someone else what you feel you are doing wrong,” and “It isn’t easy to talk about problems, however, my counselor made me feel comfortable.” Many students mentioned that the counseling experience not only activated their awareness about the issues that were concerning them, but they also reported developing more awareness of themselves and their use of strategies and resources around them through their interactions with their counselor-in-training. Furthermore, this experience gave them the opportunity to develop and implement self-regulation skills, a topic that was covered
in their Educational Psychology course, to monitor their strategies to cope with stress. Students pointed out that they were more confident in dealing with day-to-day stress because they had a tool to help them identify steps to tackle the challenges that they might face in the future. Overall, the students’ comments suggest that the counseling experience through the use of a problem-solving activity helped them actively think about their situation and directed their attention to action plans.

**Master’s Students**

The master’s level counselors-in-training benefited from participating in the training model by gaining one-on-one supervised experience in the use of a structured counseling approach. It provided the master’s students with some guidelines to follow as they helped clients systematically solve problems by identifying all current concerns, choosing the most salient concern, brainstorming all possible solutions, choosing which possible solutions are the most realistic, and identifying specific steps necessary to implement the realistic solutions. At the beginning stages of training in counseling (e.g., during the initial practicum experience), counselors-in-training are often anxious about saying and doing the “right” things, may worry about statements or activities that may be inappropriate or even harmful to clients, and often feel pressure to solve the client’s problems (Truell, 2001). The problem-solving approach employed by this training model provides a level of structure that may relieve some of this pressure and anxiety. Counselors-in-training are provided a context within which to structure their sessions, allowing them to focus more on the client than on their own behaviors and verbalizations. The activity also helps the counselor and client focus on one problem or concern at a time, thereby making change seem more manageable and realistic.

One of the master’s students stated: “I really felt it helped sharpen and develop my basic counseling skills (listening, reflecting, summarizing). As I did more of it, I also found it was flexible enough to use other counseling skills.” This feedback is encouraging, as it suggests that the problem-solving activity provides the structure necessary to refine skills beyond those related to the activity itself. This student also noted: “I learned about myself that I like to listen more than direct as a counselor, and this helped me overcome some of my discomfort at being more directive.” Again, it seems that this experience helps ease some of the anxiety of novice counselors, and facilitates the development and refinement of counseling skills. The purposeful interactions created by
the problem-solving activity can help build rapport between counselor and client, and may lower the frustration new counselors feel when first learning to work with clients.

**Doctoral Students**

This training approach allows doctoral students to apply what they have learned through their coursework in supervision and counseling theories to the supervision of actual master’s students and their clients. This experience is consistent with the CACREP (2001) standards for doctoral programs in Counselor Education and Supervision, and also is consistent with the expectation that upon completing their doctoral training, many of these students will be supervising master’s level counselors in clinical and academic settings.

The authors suggest that using the LIBRE Model within the context of supervision has several benefits for a supervisor-in-training. First, the model provides a framework in which to accomplish supervision, while allowing individuals to find their own supervisory style. This can be useful to individuals who have never had supervision experience before and may be unsure of how supervision is different from counseling. In addition, this problem-solving tool sets up the expectation that the supervision session will be purposeful, allowing for maximum benefit in a short amount of time. Since the supervisor and supervisee both are familiar with the framework of the LIBRE Model, they can enter a supervision session with an idea of what they would like to accomplish. This common language helps set the stage for relationship building by fostering a collaborative environment.

Additionally, the LIBRE Model helps doctoral students understand their engagement/connection style and that of their supervisee. This understanding can help quell some of the frustration that may arise when one person is working at a different pace than the other. By recognizing differences in styles, the supervisor-in-training can then find ways of approaching their supervisee that are congruent with the supervisee’s individual style.

One of the doctoral students stated that, “the model aids beginning counselors in gaining the confidence to reach the next level of counselor intervention.” Another student expressed that one of the benefits of participation was, “learning about my style of supervision and what students needed from me during the supervision process.” Thus, it appears that the doctoral students saw the experience as beneficial for their own
development as supervisors, and for their supervisees' development as counselors.

Faculty and Program

It is important to note that the experiences gained by these different groups of students are done so in a relationally nurturing, safe, and structured environment, where all students and sessions are supervised by university faculty. Thus, while the graduate students are gaining meaningful experiences and interactions with clients, supervisors, and supervisees, they have the opportunity to practice with a "safety net" before moving on to more independent internship and professional experiences. Holding sessions in the CFLC also supported the use of videotapes, which facilitated more in-depth feedback in supervision.

By using a relational, collaborative, multilevel model such as the one we have described, more efficient and effective use of an in-house training clinic such as the CFLC is achieved. In addition, the training clinic becomes a site for collaboration and multiple, concurrent experiences for counseling, training, supervision, and research. Thus, the training approach represents a way to maximize university resources by providing support and training to undergraduate and graduate students, while also encouraging collaboration among these groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to soliciting positive feedback from the student participants, we also asked them to describe any components of the experience that were not useful, so that we could modify the approach for future participants. We also generated some recommendations for the future use of this approach from the faculty and program perspective.

Student Perspective

While most of the undergraduate students reported that the experience was valuable, several reported feeling uncomfortable with speaking about their pressing issues with someone they did not know. As part of the informed consent process, students were offered the opportunity to discontinue the sessions at any time if they felt uncomfortable. Further, the content, focus, and depth of the sessions were determined by the undergraduates, which gave them full control over the direction of
the sessions. Nonetheless, this expressed discomfort may indicate a lack of self-awareness and thus the need for an increased emphasis on forming connections and normalizing the counseling experience. We hope that as a result of this experience, the teachers-in-training will feel more comfortable with the self-reflective experience and be willing to seek assistance with processing stressful events in the future. This seems especially important in light of recent efforts to improve retention rates among educators (see Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004).

From the master’s student perspective, one of the reported challenges involved working with the few undergraduate students who didn’t readily participate in the process (again, students had the option of discontinuing sessions at any time). This issue points to the importance of providing alternative options for these students to learn how to identify goals or challenges, perhaps by keeping a journal over the course of the semester or writing a paper about how they solved a problem using the LIBRE model. These alternatives may help students learn to process their challenges in other creative ways, even if they would rather not participate in the individual counseling experience. Moreover, if students are given several options from which to choose, then those who select to participate in the problem-solving activity with a counselor will be those most likely to make an investment in the experience and take it seriously.

From the doctoral student perspective, one of the challenges involved with supervising the master’s students was related to a perceived dependence on the LIBRE Model when the client may have needed a more in-depth counseling intervention. That is, there was a tendency for the master’s students to rely on the more structured and comfortable problem-solving and goal-setting intervention when the doctoral supervisors perceived a need to move to a deeper level of intervention. On the one hand, this challenge may be expected given the master’s students’ limited experience with counseling, and also suggests that the training approach is functioning as intended (i.e., providing novice counselors with a structured approach for their sessions and a core or foundation of counseling skills). On the other hand, the problem-solving activity is not meant to be prescriptive or inflexible, and there certainly is room within the approach for counselors to process at a deeper level when they (and the client) are ready. For example, one of the counselors-in-training who used the LIBRE Model across several semesters described how she felt using the approach over time:
First, it was helpful as a new counselor to have a structure to follow when entering my first counseling sessions. I was less nervous and felt more prepared for those first encounters. It specifically helped me work on basic counseling skills: restatements, reflections, paraphrasing, and summarizing. As I became more comfortable using these skills, I also became more adept at transitioning through the LIBRE process very smoothly. I also began to realize there is a great deal of flexibility in the LIBRE process. For example, clients might take two sessions to complete one stick figure. Or a person might choose to leave out certain steps for various reasons. Or a person might stay on the first step for the whole session and not complete the figure. At first I thought this meant I was doing something wrong, but with guidance I realized that even though the LIBRE is structured, there is room for much variation and choice within that structure. Finally, as I became more comfortable with the fluidity of the model, I found I was better able to assess the client’s need and when a different approach was indicated, I was able to start developing more advanced counseling skills. [My doctoral student supervisor] described this as “leaving the model for a little while and then coming back.” I definitely did that when it seemed particularly beneficial for the client, mostly in terms of exploring an issue more deeply or working on a specific issue.

Thus, there is a need for balance between an appropriate reliance on a structured and familiar approach, and a willingness to depart from this approach when therapeutically indicated. Based on this student’s comments, finding this balance may be seen as a developmental task, as flexibility and spontaneity increased over time with more experience. In the future, this balance will be discussed more thoroughly during the training sessions, so that practicum students understand that it is acceptable and sometimes necessary to shift away from the model, depending on the needs of the client.

A challenge reported by all three groups of students was related to logistical issues, such as coordinating schedules and paperwork. Indeed, it was especially difficult for the master’s students to find times when their undergraduate students were available for counseling, and when their doctoral student supervisors were available for supervision. These challenges indicate the need for more support to help students address these logistical issues; one solution would be to extend the hours of the
CFLC in order to provide a wider range of times for participants to meet for counseling and supervision sessions.

**Faculty and Program Perspective**

From an in-house training facility perspective, there are several recommendations that may increase both utilization and effectiveness of this collaborative, multilevel model. The first recommendation is to require both master's and doctoral level counseling practica to be scheduled in-house. This would increase the utilization of the facility, the levels of interaction (counseling, counselor observations, and supervision experiences), and research opportunities for students and faculty, as well as extend and deepen student experiences and opportunities for skills development. This would also allow for creation of more resources to assist teachers-in-training. For example, counselors-in-training could conduct appropriate group experiences such as stress management groups, time management workshops, and goal-setting seminars, in order to meet the needs of the teachers-in-training. The ability for students to continue to receive individual services within the already established relationship with the counselor-in-training would also be possible.

Additionally, by having in-house practica, both master's students and doctoral students could observe the model being utilized by other students and add understanding of that model to their skill set even if they are not seeing a teacher-in-training themselves. The LIBRE Model and Stick Figure could also be used by counselors-in-training with other clients, thus allowing expansion of its application.

The collaborative, multilevel approach and in-house practica are very conducive to expanding the types of clinical and supervision experiences available for students. Particularly well suited for this approach is live supervision (Carlozzi et al., 1997; Simon, 1982). Given the physical set-up of the CFLC (videotaping equipment and observation windows in all rooms, as well as video monitoring in the CFLC and in faculty offices), observation of and interaction among counselors-in-training, supervisors, and faculty is possible. Also, supervisors may expose students to various methods of live supervision as described by Bernard and Goodyear (2004).

Use of team and peer supervision (Anderson, 1987; Haley, 1987; Heppner et al., 1994; Landis & Young, 1994) would allow even greater interaction among doctoral and master's level students and faculty supervisors. With the master's student participants, pairing students in the School Counseling track with students in the Community Counseling
track would be advantageous in that students could learn from one another’s different perspectives. Utilizing these models also gives teachers-in-training exposure to complex training methods and an important role in this collaborative, multilevel approach.

Specifically, a team approach to supervision would allow master’s students to observe each other in session to see how other students are applying the model, identify what counseling skills are being used, learn case conceptualization skills, and be exposed to a variety of issues besides those of their own teacher-in-training clients. Doctoral students and faculty would be able to participate in teams with the master’s students, thereby exposing them to supervision and consultation skills. The team approach would also facilitate supervision at all levels concurrently: doctoral supervision of master’s students, faculty supervision of doctoral students, faculty supervision of master’s students, and peer supervision.

CONCLUSION

The creative training approach described in this paper meets the educational and experiential needs of students across levels of training. The approach fills a service gap for undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral level students. It provides the master’s students an extended supervisory experience within the university setting. At the doctoral level, students are provided a problem-solving structure to facilitate the supervision they provide their master’s level counselors-in-training. For the undergraduate teachers-in-training, students are afforded a safe place to problem-solve, self-regulate, and express themselves. Further, the approach appears to facilitate change among participants as they transition to new roles: the master’s students’ transition from students to counselors, the doctoral students’ transition from counselors to supervisors, and the undergraduate teachers-in-training are provided the opportunity to develop self-awareness, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills, which are sure to benefit them in their transition from students to professional educators.

Perhaps of most noteworthy significance was the number of master’s level students who expressed their appreciation at the end of the semester and asked to participate again. The students have now championed the value of the experience, requesting its continuation, and doctoral students are now assuming leadership roles in the LIBRE Model training. Several undergraduate students have asked if they can continue seeing a counselor-
in-training, indicating that the experience has changed their way of operating by helping them identify problems and set goals.

At the same time, we recognize the need to conduct a more rigorous and systematic evaluation of outcomes; this represents an important next step in the development of this training approach. Included in our evaluation procedures would be an assessment of the generalizability of problem-solving skills acquired by the undergraduates, analyses of whether those undergraduates who completed the activity are more academically successful (e.g., earn higher grades, graduate sooner) than those who don’t, an empirical examination of whether participating in the training approach enhances the development of skills within the master’s and doctoral counselors-in-training, and consideration of whether completion of the activities and questionnaires enhances students’ self-awareness of stress, coping strategies, self-efficacy, motivation, and engagement.

REFERENCES


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APPENDIX
LIBRE Model Stick Figure Tool
Used to Guide and Record Client Responses

1 - Listen and list all that is happening. Write one item on each line.

2 - On the line above, Identify the item you'd most like to process and write it as a question.

3 - Brainstorm solutions writing down options below. Next rank order.

4 - Reality Test probable options & record each response - "What would happen if I did xxx?"

What are your steps to your solution? Write them down below.

5 - Encourage Write your timelines for your best solution. Write it down below.