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Signature Pedagogies: A Framework for Pedagogical Foundations in Counselor Education

Eric R. Baltrinic, Carrie Wachter Morris

The authors offer the term *signature pedagogies*, which refers to types of teaching distinct to a particular profession, as a framework for conceptualizing and advancing our knowledge about the pedagogical foundations in counselor education. Broad and specific features of signature pedagogies are defined at the professional, program, and course levels along with counselor education-related examples. The authors offer implications and reflection questions to encourage readers to apply the content of this article to inform their own views on the pedagogical foundations of the profession and to conceptualize related instructional research.

Keywords: pedagogical foundations, signature pedagogies, counselor education, instructional research

Twenty years ago, in a special section of *Counselor Education and Supervision* (CES), Thomas Sexton (1998) identified a lack of research on the fundamental pedagogical assumptions used in counselor education to prepare counselors and counselor educators. Specifically, he noted that the manner in which counseling content was delivered and the use of developmental and theoretical models to guide teaching efforts in counselor education had “largely gone unexplored” (Sexton, 1998, p. 66). In fact, Nelson and Neufeldt (1998) were unable to find any scholarly articles on pedagogy in the counseling literature, which was justifiably concerning. Fortunately, there is now some evidence in the counselor education literature addressing this concern (e.g., Association for Counselor Education and Supervision [ACES], 2016; Barrio Minton et al., 2014). Recently, Barrio Minton et al. (2018) found a sharp increase in empirical articles in counselor education articles between 2001–2010 and 2011–2015 incorporating pedagogical foundations, potentially due to the expansion of doctoral-level teaching and learning curricula and internships required by the 2016 Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Program (CACREP) Standards (2015). Korcuska (2016) cautioned that simply grounding the rationale for pedagogy studies in the CACREP standards could lead authors to overlook

the underlying pedagogical structures and lead to studies without “heft or staying power” (p. 156). It is plausible to presume that it is uncertain if, as a profession, we are asking the “right” questions, and studying the “best” things to increase our collective understanding of the pedagogical foundations in counselor education. Overall, both Korcuska and Barrio Minton and colleagues (2014) recommended that more research be conducted on the processes (i.e., pedagogy) for preparing teachers in counselor education, and examining the links between pedagogy, effectiveness in the classroom, and preparing students for professional practice.

Pedagogy in counselor education informed by research “provides the profession with robust infrastructure” (Korcuska, 2016, p. 157). And, although the research base on pedagogy in counselor education is building, a unifying theoretical framework for facilitating professional dialogues and future research on pedagogy in counselor education is still lacking. Hence the purpose of this article is to reconsider Sexton’s original call by offering a signature pedagogies (Shulman, 2005a) framework for conceptualizing the pedagogical foundations in counselor education. Specifically, the content of this article will define a signature pedagogies frame-

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work, suggest examples for linking signature pedagogies to pedagogical foundations in counselor education, and offer suggestions for future research.

Defining Signature Pedagogies

Lee Shulman (2005a) described *signature pedagogies* as particular types of teaching used by disciplines to prepare students. He added that these types of teaching are notably distinct to a particular profession and serve to organize the ways “in which future practitioners are educated for their professions” (p. 52). Shulman suggested signature pedagogies are pervasive and unifying modes of teaching and learning, meaning they are not idiosyncratic to instructors, programs, or institutions; instead, they are present in all institutions preparing practitioners within a particular discipline. Signature pedagogies are thought to contain both broad and specific features. Broad features of signature pedagogies at the professional and program levels are: (1) distinct to a profession, (2) pervasive within professional programs’ curricula, and (3) pervasive across institutions implementing similar programs within a profession. Specific features of signature pedagogies, which are often (but not always) identifiable at the course level, contain surface, deep, and implicit structures (Shulman, 2005a). *Surface structures* refer to “what” teachers do, those concrete teaching methods such as lectures, student-led discussions, small-group or experiential activities, case studies, and role-plays. *Deep structures* refer to the underlying assumptions for “how” teachers best impart a body of knowledge (Shulman, 2005a). Deep structures are linked to a paradigm or pedagogy (e.g., constructivist) guiding teachers’ actions in the classroom. Finally, *implicit structures* refer to “why” teachers do what they do, including the prevailing beliefs, attitudes, values, and dispositions, which relate to professional identity. Implicit structures reflect the underlying professional morals on how students representing a profession should think, act, and perform ethically with integrity. Examples of implicit structures can be found in professional competencies, codes of ethics, or best practices documents. For something to be considered a signature pedagogy it must contain elements of both broad and specific features. Overall, signature pedagogies help professionals within a discipline to define (a) what counts as important knowledge, (b) how

knowledge transpires through acts of teaching and learning, (c) how knowledge is sequenced, and (d) how knowledge is evaluated and accepted (Shulman, 2005a).

Pedagogy in Counselor Education

In counselor education, the term pedagogy refers to the art and science of teaching, which is historically rooted in skills-training models (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998). Skills training-based pedagogy was believed to be Eurocentric and lacking attention to counselor reflectivity and the counseling relationship. Thus, authors challenged the profession to move away from a sole reliance on skills-training pedagogy in favor of using multicultural (Fong, 1998), developmental (Haag Granello & Hazler, 1998), and constructivist pedagogies (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998) to guide counselor preparation. Additional approaches relevant to teaching in counselor education include learner-centered (Moate & Cox, 2015) and transparent pedagogies (Dollarhide et al., 2007). Others promoted the use of critical pedagogies (e.g., Brubaker et al., 2010; Haskins & Singh, 2015) to ground published work in counselor education, although studies conducted in 2011–2015 revealed expansion into even more areas (Barrio Minton et al., 2018). Counselor educators have clear pedagogical options to move beyond skills-training models, and yet, these pedagogies lack a unifying framework. As we will describe, the concept of signature pedagogies, with its broad and specific features, offers a unifying framework for identifying and organizing the pedagogical foundations at the course, program, and professional levels within counselor education. This is important because instructors and programs need to be able to identify the shared and essential elements guiding what, how, and why they provide specific instruction; identifying signature pedagogies could help counseling professionals recognize the distinct and pervasive aspects of the pedagogical foundations in counselor education. As such, signature pedagogies in counselor education should contain both recognizable elements for training practitioners and simultaneously be distinct from other disciplines.

Although a critical examination of pedagogy in counselor education as a whole is still needed, evidence supporting approaches to teaching specific

content areas at the course level is growing (see Barrio Minton et al., 2014; Barrio Minton et al., 2018). Researchers identified a number of trends across 15 years of pedagogically-focused literature, including a need for a more solid grounding of instructional research in the literature, a focus on master's-level coursework (and, conversely, minimal literature on doctoral-level training), a relative lack of track-specific master's-level literature outside of the school counseling specialty area, and a primary focus on teaching course content focused on diversity. Conversely, there was minimal attention to topics related to research, assessment, career development, and human growth and development. Authors called for further investigation of the rigor and methodologies in the scholarship of teaching and learning within counselor education. They also recommended reviews of research to clarify what we know and how we view teaching and learning in counselor education as well as connections between instructional strategies and development of clinical skills. Despite our advancements, there is still a lack of research on the pedagogical foundations in counselor education. In particular, little is known about signature pedagogies in counselor education. This is concerning because the concept of signature pedagogy contains common definitions and features that could be used to unify professional dialogues and instructional research on the pedagogical foundations in counselor education.

Signature Pedagogies in Helping Professions

Compelling descriptions of signature pedagogies are present in the literatures of helping professions disciplines such as social work, psychology, human development, and clinical mental health counseling. Authors have conceptualized the broad and specific features of signature pedagogies used in their respective professions in varying detail, which are summarized in this section.

The profession of social work has adopted field education as the signature pedagogy for the profession (Holden et al., 2011; Wayne et al., 2010). Field education is identified as a signature pedagogy in both the 2008 and 2015 versions of the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The CSWE

definition contains broad features of a signature pedagogy; specifically, it “contains elements of instruction and of socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimension of (social work) practice” (CSWE, 2015, p. 12). The CSWE standards also suggest that field education is distinct and pervasive across social work programs' curricula. The standards also note specific features in that field education is thought to help social work students think, perform, and act ethically in ways that demonstrate social work competencies, which aligns with the definition of an implicit structure of a signature pedagogy. Wayne et al. (2010) identified additional specific signature features within field education training, including the deep structure of adult learning theory (i.e., andragogy; Knowles, 1980) and the surface structure of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) methods in social work classrooms. These deep and surface structures are noted as interrelated components of the social work curriculum and as having equally important impact on the “development of the requisite competencies of professional practice” (CSWE, 2015, p. 12). Overall, Wayne et al. (2010) observed that although all students are pervasively assigned to field practice settings, considerable variability existed among field instructors on how to best impart knowledge to students. It seems stronger evidence is needed on the broad and specific features of field education as a signature pedagogy to increase its credibility (Holden et al., 2011).

Supervision has been identified as a signature pedagogy in other mental health professions such as psychology (Goodyear, 2007; Goodyear et al., 2005). Supervision has been identified as a defining educational practice in counseling as well (Borders et al., 1991; Borders et al., 2014). Broadly speaking, supervision is thought to be a distinct teaching approach used for instructing students during intensive skills-training experiences and during phases of training involving encounters with actual clients. These authors suggest supervision is signature because *all* students working with clients do so under the supervision of a faculty member and/or site supervisor. Supervision transpires in small groups, individually, or in triads, in contrast to larger didactically oriented classrooms. An additional broad feature of supervision is its pervasiveness within and across counseling programs. In other words, every

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counseling student working with clients within and across similar counseling programs should be receiving supervision as part of their clinical training. Supervision also contains specific features of a signature pedagogy. Specifically, supervision contains surface structures such as didactic, corrective, and process-oriented supervisor interventions that transpire within the deeper structure of an engaging, empathic, and developmentally oriented instructor-learner dialogue (Goodyear, 2007). Deep structures of supervision are guided by pedagogy or paradigms, which inform instructors' approaches to the work. For example, when considering deep structures of supervision, one can imagine that if every supervisor was engaging in instruction guided by a social justice paradigm, one would expect to see similarities, albeit with some variety in the implementation of the paradigm across settings. In this case, the definitions and features of signature pedagogies can guide us to look for commonalities in the deep structures of supervision while acknowledging some variety exists across settings and without losing the unifying purpose of a signature pedagogy. Additionally, supervision is grounded in the implicit structure of fostering the complex mitigating ingredient to student success: the supervisory alliance (Goodyear, 2007). A final implicit structure guiding supervision pertains to the complex and ambiguous teaching and learning experiences paralleling real-world practice, thus echoing Shulman's (2005b) belief that a professional has to be prepared to "practice" within their discipline "whether they have enough information or not" (p. 3). We concur that supervision contains broad and specific features of a signature pedagogy. We also believe that further exploration of the broad and specific features of supervision as a signature pedagogy is needed in counselor education.

In the field of human development, Bartell and Vespia (2009) examined signature pedagogies, recognizing that summarizing all of the pedagogies in their profession and in related professions would be too unwieldy an exercise. Instead, these authors focused on identifying pedagogical themes within their literature, which were formulated into several key principles for signature pedagogies in the field of human development: (a) a pervasive developmental perspective, (b) intentional curriculum design and sequencing, (c) active learning and real-

world problem solving, (d) an emphasis on context and not just the biological and psychological aspects of development, and (e) attention to the learning environment. Bartell and Vespia's conclusions align with our view that examinations of signature pedagogies in counselor education require extending the examination beyond the individual level to the profession at large. Specifically, because signature pedagogies are intended to help all counseling students think, act, and perform with integrity the essential aspects of the counseling profession, we caution researchers and educators against limiting conceptualizations of signature pedagogies solely to instructors' teaching methods. Instead, we suggest that counselor educators explicitly and broadly apply Shulman's (2005a, 2005b) definition of signature pedagogies to counselor education. For example, Ciccone (2009) suggested that signature pedagogies help all students learn about a discipline, that is, "a set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions used to 'make sense of human experience'" (p. xv). His formulation shares some conceptual similarities with the goals of professional ethics codes, professional counseling competencies, and professional identity models but differs from them by directly and continuously linking students' development to the intentional use of the signature pedagogies.

Finally, a clinical mental health counseling-specific example was provided by Brackette (2014). Through inductive reasoning and a subsequent content analysis of all of her clinical mental health counseling (CMHC) courses, Brackette identified all of the signature pedagogies she used to "teach students to be clinical mental health counselors." We have organized Brackette's conclusions into a series of reflection questions representing the broad and specific features of signature pedagogies at the professional, program, and course levels (see Table 1). These prompts could be used by readers to analyze their own courses, tracks, or programs. We will return to this idea later in this article. It is important to note that Brackette focused on the individual analysis of her own teaching, which was aptly linked to a larger goal of contributing to the scholarship of teaching and learning. However, to apply the concept of signature pedagogies to understand the foundations of pedagogy in counselor education,

Table 1

*Signature Pedagogy Reflection Questions—Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC)**Example*

Signature Pedagogies		
CMHC Track	Broad Features	Specific Features
Professional-Level Considerations	What is <i>distinct</i> about how all CMHC tracks teach students to be counselors?	What is <i>distinct</i> about how my CMCH track teaches students to be counselors?
Program-Level Considerations	What are the <i>pervasive</i> curriculum elements across all CMHC tracks?	What are the <i>pervasive</i> curriculum elements in my CMHC track?
Course-Level Considerations (Brackette, 2014)	What are the commonalities in instruction, learning outcomes, and requirements across all courses I teach? <i>CMHC Track Courses:</i> • Introduction to CMHC • Counseling theories • Counseling internship • Cultural perspectives in counseling • Advanced exceptionalities	What are the surface, deep, and implicit structures of the signature pedagogies that I use to help students think, act, and perform their CMHC roles with integrity? <i>Surface Structure (What):</i> • Didactic instruction w/assessment • Group and experiential exercises • Role plays • Case studies • Journals • Reflection papers <i>Deep Structure (How):</i> • Field experience/service learning • Constructivist pedagogy (main) • Transparent counseling pedagogy • Ecological model (Internship) • Transformative pedagogy <i>Implicit Structure (Why):</i> • Promote instructor and student growth and learning • Scholarship of teaching and learning • Strengthen instruction and curriculum in counselor education

future research would need to extend beyond an individual-level analysis. To that end, we encourage counselor educators to corroborate this type of exploration on a broader level through a community dialogue and through additional research efforts.

Towards Identifying Signature Pedagogies in Counselor Education

Ciccone (2009) noted “signature pedagogies is a term that invites thought provoking elaboration” from educators (p. xv). Again, signature pedagogies are not simply a collection of disparate competencies and practices, or a compilation of idiosyncratic beliefs of what works best—they are broader in scope and are prevalent across counselor education

programs. Signature pedagogies offer counselor educators a platform for examining the many ways in which we (a) deliver curricula that define professional counselor and counselor educator skills, professional contributions, and identity, (b) provide comprehensive socialization of students to the nuances, values, thought processes, and professional characteristics of counseling and counselor education, and (c) prepare counselors and counselor educators to be professionals. With that said, we propose readers identify and define what they consider to be broad and specific features of signature pedagogies in counselor education. When identifying potential signature pedagogies, consider what, how, and why something is signature pedagogy and consider the implications of naming something “signature” at the professional, program, and course levels in counselor education. Some examples are provided below in an effort to prompt further exploration by others. Some reflection questions for engaging in this exercise are provided in Table 2.

Profession

At the professional level signature pedagogies are instrumental for preparing all students to be contributing members of a distinct profession of counseling and counselor education (Shulman, 2005a, 2005b). Identifying signature pedagogies can only occur in the context of understanding the fundamental characteristics of the discipline itself. Accordingly, we would anticipate all counseling programs would include signature pedagogies to achieve the goal of socializing counseling students into the profession, implying some level of agreement on the unifying characteristics of the profession. Thus, these signature pedagogies would contain aspects of the professional culture of the counseling field that would be commonly present across programs, regardless of physical location, method of delivering content, and other characteristics specific to individual training programs.

We can think of several topics that may be shared among counselor educators such as the importance of a professional counselor

identity, obtaining professional counseling competencies, engaging in inclusive counseling practices, preparing counseling students for licensure, and incorporating a developmental and wellness-oriented perspective in counseling, in addition to a focus on problems or pathology (Young & Cashwell, 2017). If we can assume these (or other) topics are important and ubiquitous, then the question becomes: How do all counselor

Table 2

Signature Pedagogy General Reflection Questions

Level	Signature Pedagogies	
	Broad Features	Specific Features
Professional	What is <i>distinct</i> about how the counseling profession prepares students to be counselors? What is <i>distinct</i> about how the counseling profession prepares doctoral students to be educators?	What are the signature pedagogies used to prepare students in these distinct areas?
Program	What is <i>pervasive</i> in the counselor education curriculum to prepare students to be counselors? What is <i>pervasive</i> in the counselor education curriculum to prepare doctoral students to be educators?	What are the common/unique signature pedagogies associated with counseling programs as a whole? Are there signature pedagogies specifically linked to different tracks (e.g., school vs. clinical mental health) or levels (e.g., master's vs. doctoral)?
Course	What are the commonalities in instruction, learning outcomes, and requirements across all courses I teach?	What are the surface, deep, and implicit structures of the signature pedagogies that I use to help students think, act, and perform their counseling roles with integrity?

programs teach these topics in distinct and pervasive ways? From there we can ask: What do all counselor education programs need to have in common in order to socialize their counseling students into the profession as counselors or counselor educators? It is in answering these questions that we can begin to identify the common pedagogical elements (i.e., signature pedagogies) in counselor education.

Program

At the program level, counselor educators need to consider a number of factors regarding curriculum and programming (see Wood et al., 2016 for more discussion). On the surface, signature pedagogies can pertain to the content delivered (e.g., time to degree, financial considerations), whereas deeper level considerations pertain to the foundational aspects of counselor preparation curriculum (e.g., accreditation standards and licensure requirements; competency documents and standards; student mastery, learning outcomes, and success in the field of practice). Examining surface and deeper level programming foci and identifying those foci that are ubiquitous across training programs regardless of regional differences, differences in accreditation status, and differences in method of delivery (e.g., online, hybrid, face-to-face) can lead to identifying potential corresponding signature pedagogies.

For example, given that some counselor preparation programs are accredited under the CACREP 2009 Standards, some are accredited under the CACREP 2016 Standards, some are accredited by CAEP, and others are not accredited, when we examine possible signature pedagogies in counselor education, we would expect that a program that is truly a counseling preparation program would incorporate those signature pedagogies regardless of accreditation status. Thus, the focus of signature pedagogies falls less on solely following the standards articulated by CACREP and more on the *values* that underscore CACREP standards, particularly those that are consistent across decades of CACREP standards. Therefore, language found in sets of standards such as CACREP could serve as a roadmap for identifying elements of pedagogy that are signature to the profession at the program level. Identified signature pedagogies would be those expressed throughout counseling-related curricula

across all counseling programs. We would expect that signature pedagogies would also lie in the answers to the questions: What do entry-level counselor trainees (or doctoral-level trainees) need to be able to do? How do we want our students to be able to think? How do we want them to act in the role(s) for which they are being prepared? And although we acknowledge that those questions may feel prescriptive in some way, they are offered to stimulate cognitive development and complexity among counselor educators and researchers.

Another example of conceptualizing signature pedagogies at the program level can be explained by intersecting the concept of signature pedagogies with the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). Counselor educators using UbD first propose the significant and lasting learning goals, or desired results. Then, assessments to obtain evidence of learning and the assignments and activities used to lead students to desired results are planned. Specifically, the UbD framework is a three-stage backward design process to guide creation and alignment of curricula, where educators identify desired results, determine assessment evidence, and plan learning experiences and instruction (see Wiggins & McTighe, 2011 for more detailed information). The UbD framework suggests that desired results are a function of the values and principles contained in our discipline, rather than a function of generic views on learning (Chick et al., 2009). Hence, desired results informed by UbD would be linked to signature pedagogies. To take this a step further, we suggest that signature pedagogies appear in the first stage—identifying desired results—when we ask ourselves questions such as: “What should students know, understand, and be able to do as a result of completing their counselor education programs? ...What enduring understandings are desired?” (p. 2).

In summary, signature pedagogies are the pervasive instructional vehicles used by counselor educators across programs to impact desired results for counseling students. When looking specifically at counselor training curricula, these desired results are essentially values that we would expect to be consistent within and across tracks and across degree status. While there may be a differential focus on some other aspects (e.g., entry-level training

would likely focus more on the work of practitioners, and doctoral-level training would add concepts related to teaching and research as a production of new knowledge), the values driving the curricula should be consistent, even as they are applied to different facets of job requirements for those with master's-level versus doctoral-level training. And, in turn, the values inherent in the curricula should reflect the profession's views on how counseling practitioners should think, act, and promote the profession, the essence of which is inherent in the definition of signature pedagogies.

Course

At the course level, signature pedagogies contain three common structures (i.e., deep, surface, and implicit structures) used by instructors to impact the learning environment. In applying these structures, we would anticipate seeing similarities in pedagogical approaches used within and across counselor education courses, even if assignments and delivery methods (e.g., face-to-face, hybrid, synchronous online, asynchronous online) differ. For example, in the surface structures—the teaching strategies and interventions—for courses that focus on counseling skills, we would anticipate seeing similarities, even if overall assignments differed. Many of these courses in counselor education programs would likely incorporate some form of practicing newly acquired counseling skills through role plays, mock sessions, and other skill-development activities. On the other hand, courses such as orientation to clinical mental health counseling or school counseling may focus on counselor roles and identity development within the helping professions.

Deep structures refer to the underlying teaching philosophy that guides the instructor's classroom activities and would likely include similarities based on some of the underlying values of the overall counseling profession. For example, deep structures could include known approaches such as learner-centered (Moate & Cox, 2015), constructivist (McAuliffe & Erickson, 2002), or transparent pedagogies (Dollarhide et al., 2007), which may be pervasive based on how a course is consistently designed, delivered, and evaluated within a curriculum. In her article, Brackette (2014) noted three different theoretical pedagogical theories that

guided her CMHC coursework, along with the ecological model and service learning associated with the process that guided her CMHC coursework (see Table 1). Although the individual teaching philosophies and the approaches of instructors teaching the same course may differ, we would anticipate that there would be core similarities in the same course, regardless of who teaches it. For example, we might anticipate that courses that focus on skill development would use similar approaches to the learning and demonstration of those skills, even if the modality of course delivery or the instructor of that course differed.

Finally, the implicit structures of signature pedagogies at the course level—the professional attitudes, values, and dispositions that related to professional identity—would also be similar regardless of setting and individual instructor. These implicit structures would, in the previously mentioned case of a counseling skills course, likely be driven by content from our professional codes of ethics, best practices, professional competencies, and accreditation standards that we anticipate that any practicing counselor would have mastered. Thus, regardless of how those classes are administered, the course content would be influenced by these core values of the counseling profession. In other words, as we view the implicit structures of signature pedagogies, we are identifying the common attitudes, values, and beliefs that all counselor educators embody.

Implications

After reflecting on the values, concepts, and foundations of the field of counselor education and counselor preparation, the logical next step is to identify the signature pedagogies used in counselor education. Answering this question has important implications for the profession, for programs, and for our individual coursework. From the lens of the counseling profession, this could help us shift to grounding accreditation practices and standards in signature pedagogies, rather than grounding counseling pedagogy and learning theory in accreditation standards, which we posit is the current state of the field. Identifying those signature pedagogies would allow the field to better ensure our teaching is grounded in the processes that define our field. Ide-

ally, this would provide counselor educators a common conceptual framework from which to build content that addresses student learning outcomes, accreditation standards, and other nuances and specifics of counseling and counselor education content.

At a programmatic level, defining the signature pedagogies of the profession would help programs examine what and how they are teaching and why. For example, signature pedagogies could influence the design and content program evaluations—which could include having individual programs anchor their work in both the signature pedagogies of the profession and areas of expertise or populations that are regionally or locally specific. Specifically, a program in an area with a burgeoning immigrant population or one that was located by a major military base might not only examine the signature pedagogies of the profession but also in the national, regional, or local needs of the communities that they serve. If we as counselor educators know that we have certain signature pedagogies, we can ground ourselves in those. This could allow us to more consistently look at how our curricula could be more intentionally developmental in nature, in addition to looking at the completion of accreditation standards. Essentially, we would be grounding our curricula in the pedagogies of the field and our own areas and populations of expertise and determining what we can do to impact learning outcomes through curriculum design and teaching practice.

From a course standpoint, signature pedagogies can help instructors define what they are doing and why. They may also help us figure out how to evaluate student learning through a signature pedagogies lens, rather than a standards-based lens. Rather than focusing on a multitude of important but disconnected student learning outcomes (SLOs), perhaps we as instructors could focus on the signature pedagogies that guide us for the course or the field and determine, developmentally, how to build our student learning from there, while incorporating important content. This shift to viewing student learning through a signature pedagogies versus a multiple SLO lens parallels the change from the CACREP 2009 *Standards* to the CACREP 2016 *Standards* (i.e., a move away from multiple and potential disconnected SLOs to focused performance

indicators). Overall, although some work has been done in counselor education to provide cohesion to the pedagogical foundations of counselor education, some of which may not be explicitly considered as signature pedagogies, more needs to be done in terms of articulating and developing a pedagogical foundation in counselor education. Thus, we have the multidimensional concept of signature pedagogies as a framework for counselor educators and researchers to continue the work of articulating the pedagogical foundations of our profession.

Future Research

Similarly, there are research implications for counseling and counselor education, as well as for programs and for individual instructors. At the professional level, there are multiple wider-scale studies that could target research on the field. What do all programs that identify as counseling or counselor education do to prepare their students? Researchers could survey the population or a subset of counseling programs that includes multiple tracks (e.g., clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, addictions counseling, etc.) or levels (i.e., master's, doctoral) to see what their methods are for delivering content and skill development. What are the signature pedagogies of the profession and how do they differ (or stay consistent) from track to track and level to level? Primary initial research implications include reaching consensus around the signature pedagogies, rather than focusing on how or if specific standards are met through the signature pedagogies.

At the program level, research implications might help programs determine what they are doing and why. What are faculty doing in the classroom to influence and enhance student learning outcomes? What particular pedagogical practices are reliable from program to program? Currently, we as instructors and faculty do not examine what instructors are *doing* and the impact of practice on the learning process as much as we look at what students learned, or what students and instructors think or feel about teaching and learning (see Barrio Minton et al., 2014; Barrio Minton et al., 2018). Programs could look at signature pedagogies when examining instructor influences on student learning. Observing what works within or between programs is less

about standardizing teaching, but rather identifying some core areas that work well, and then innovating from there. The basis from which to innovate is likely already present in our literature (see Barrio Minton et al., 2014; Barrio Minton et al., 2018 for some examples). Additionally, faculty could create performance assessments based on what we know instructors are doing. For example, faculty who work at CACREP-accredited institutions use key performance indicators (KPIs), which are a prominent part of the accreditation process under the 2016 standards. What would it mean for individual programs if faculty tied KPIs to signature pedagogies? Would that help us better developmentally tailor our programs? What would that mean for program evaluation and our ability to adapt our program to local, regional, national, and international areas of concern or interest?

At the course level, instructors may work individually or coordinate with others teaching the same content to assess if and how student learning was increased by taking the course. Instructors could look at their methods of teaching to see how specific pedagogies influenced student learning, including having feedback about course delivery that is grounded in those pedagogies. Instructors could then identify areas for their own professional development around teaching, helping us hone that craft. Similarly, there are myriad ways to research our work in the classroom, further pushing the field to enhance our scholarship of teaching and learning—and perhaps even look at links between our instruction and client outcomes reported by students and alumni. Instructional research at its best could look at potential real-world implications and outcomes for clients.

Moving Forward

In this article, we have identified a need for a unifying conceptual framework to further the profession's effort at unifying its pedagogical foundations. A definition of signature pedagogies is offered along with examples at the professional, program, and course levels. Successful efforts in identifying signature pedagogies using counselor education would move us in the direction originally proposed by Sexton (1998), which is to better understand the fundamental elements of pedagogy used to

prepare counselors and counselor educators. To that end, we propose two overarching questions for readers to consider:

- (1) *What are the signature pedagogies used in counselor education?*
- (2) *How do signature pedagogies contribute to the pedagogical foundations of counselor education programs?*

We intend these questions to foster collegial discussion, to generate research ideas, and to assist with program and curricular refinements among colleagues. As previously mentioned, readers can also refer to Table 2 for additional reflection questions by level. Signature pedagogies are intended here as a bridging framework for responding to the aforementioned questions. Accordingly, we will leave it to our capable colleagues to help us continue the dialogue.

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