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Article 11

## **Group Counseling Curriculum: A Developmental Humanistic Approach**

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Counselor educators are faced with the challenge of preparing counselors in training to effectively facilitate safe, honest, and open psychological exploration through connection with others. Irvin D. Yalom, a leader in group psychotherapy theory and practice, emphasizes that the interpersonal process between group therapy members is of primary importance. Coining the interpersonal process in groups as “group cohesiveness,” Yalom teaches, “group cohesiveness is not only a potent therapeutic force in its own right. It is a pre-condition for other therapeutic factors to function optimally,” (Yalom, 2005, p. 55). This leads to the primary focus of a master’s level group counseling course—to begin the process of teaching counseling students how to create the necessary conditions in their groups in order for the functions of groups to be successful. Just as group leaders facilitate interpersonal and intrapersonal learning as clients make new discoveries about themselves while sharing feelings of connectedness with others, group counseling instructors can instill an environment of collaborative learning and shared experience for students. As such, a powerful instructional method integrating the concepts of both cognitive developmental and humanistic theory for a master’s-level group counseling curriculum is presented.

## **The Developmental Humanistic Approach**

A Developmental Humanistic (DH) approach is presented as a method of educating beginning counseling students in creating the therapeutic conditions necessary for struggling clients to begin to find a sense of belonging and understanding. This grounded, thought-provoking curriculum is designed to inspire counselor educators to develop an instructional style as dynamic group facilitators. This approach outlines a curriculum for instructing group counseling students in facilitating the group process and influencing positive change through embodying the role of the group leader; to live by example.

First, group counseling instructors discuss their own sense of humanity as the course unfolds in order to personalize the interpersonal experience for students. By doing so, this course engages a person-to-person relationship experience for the students, revealing honesty and openness toward the nature of the human struggle in all of us as continual learners. “Our most powerful source of influencing clients in a positive direction is through our living example of who we are and of our willingness to continually struggle to become the person we are able to become” (C. O. Matthews, personal communication, 1993). Similarly, group counseling instructors have an opportunity to engage in facilitating change and growth in their students by engaging in a learning-based relationship with their students.

Next, the DH approach incrementally introduces counseling students to the concepts and principles of group counseling theory and practice through enhancing counseling students’ awareness of both interpersonal and intrapersonal processes. This curriculum introduces the group experience through a personal growth group led by a professional counselor. This course serves as a precursor to the more didactic content of the full semester course. As a prerequisite course, it is designed to engage new counseling students as interactive participants in a growth group that provides personal reference to future didactic training. Moreover, this pre-course growth group facilitates a self-exploration process as an inherent component of a comprehensive counseling program.

Following the growth group is a full semester group counseling course, in which students are introduced to the content knowledge necessary to develop a sound foundation in group work practices. This curriculum provides in-class experiential group exercises that are designed to create opportunities to both observe groups facilitated by professional counselors then practice these skills with the support and guidance of their supervisors in order to meet the developmental needs of beginning-level counseling students. Thus the group counseling curriculum builds upon both personal experience and didactic instruction in order to stimulate students’ cognitive developmental growth in a supportive environment. The key to this dynamic approach is to build the student’s personal awareness and skill agility by creating carefully structured, incremental segments of personal and professional growth throughout.

## **Theory and Rationale**

### **Group Work Instruction**

This course provides the first opportunity for counselor educators to instruct new counseling students in the rich experience of learning the history of group therapy, group dynamics and process stages, group leader techniques and approaches, and facilitation of the growth process for a wide array of clients. As such, it is critical for the instructor to match the educational experience to the student's readiness, remaining focused on presenting basic theory while preparing students for facilitating groups as they move into their field experiences.

Barlow's (2004) four domains of teaching group skills are interwoven into the curriculum: experiential opportunities; academic instruction; observation and feedback; and supervision by trained group leaders. At the beginning level, an experiential element opens opportunities for these students to learn about themselves as a group member in the midst of group dynamics. The prerequisite growth group and purposeful reflection upon this experience stimulate learning in conjunction with the academic material of the group course. To meet the criteria for the beginning student in the academic domain, this group counseling course builds a foundation of knowledge regarding group therapy effectiveness, best practices, and theoretical perspectives (Barlow, 2004). This is accompanied by the use of various texts, readings, lecture and classroom exercises and assignments. Elements of the observation domain at this introductory level include watching and engaging in feedback on both oneself and others. Through viewing group sessions, guest speakers, classroom demonstrations, role plays, and leadership roles in class exercises, students are exposed to these opportunities to spark interaction-based discussion and the infusion of increasingly complex concepts.

The DH curriculum provides opportunities to practice and receive feedback in role play and fishbowl experiential exercises. Since counseling students will gain further proficiency in subsequent practicum and internship experiences within the counselor preparation program, it is important for students to first learn and practice group leadership skills in this course before leading a live group with real clients (Barlow, 2004).

### **Counselor Preparation and Identity Development**

In addition to Barlow's four domains, the DH curriculum orients counseling students to form their own professional identities and understand the professional roles they will hold when practicing in the counseling field. Master's level counseling students in an introductory group counseling course begin the journey of learning how to facilitate positive change. As these students learn how to become change agents, they are beginning to formulate their identity as counselors (Auxier, Hughes, & Kline, 2003). Research illustrates the importance of fostering the development of both personal and professional identity in beginning counselors in order to augment the counseling student's growth process (Stoltenberg, 1981). Therefore, the focus of training in counselor education and supervision should not rely solely on skill development but

should also necessitate each student's "embarking on a course of development that will culminate in the emergence of a counselor identity" (Stoltenberg, 1981, p. 59).

As such, the role of DH educators and supervisors of beginning counselors is to facilitate opportunities for exploration of counselor identity by modeling appropriate professional behaviors and creating an environment of personal inclusion and exploration of diverse thoughts, ideas, and cultures. Beginning counselors undertake the process of developing increasingly complex cognitive processes, including concepts of world, others, and self (McAuliffe, 1993). The DH approach to group counseling instruction stimulates this process by engaging counseling students in building their counseling identity by utilizing both their analytical agility and conceptual framework-making strategies for learning how to be an effective group counselor.

Student knowledge of group work through the DH approach is organized by the following four course components: foundation in theory; observation and learning of group skills; participation in an experiential group; and practice leading or co-leading group work (Furr & Barrett, 2000), necessary components for learning the theory, process, and skills required to facilitate the group process. Similarly, this course teaches basic theoretical concepts that promote growth and healing through group work itself. Chen and Rybak (2004) support this approach based on Sullivan's interpersonal theory, object relations, family systems, experiential therapy, and brief therapy as five foundations to the development of group facilitation and its sound therapeutic power. Our instructional method not only supports the teachings of these theories as the bases for group efficacy but also encapsulates their tenets for a teaching approach to group counseling. As such, these theories are referenced throughout the course to bring a theoretical perspective to our students' technical application of group leadership skills.

As an introductory-level group course, this approach sets new counseling students' anxieties at ease by structuring their learning in developmentally appropriate steps. Students first observe other group facilitators, verbally process the dynamics of the groups they are observing, and then venture into leading groups with a student co-counselor. Yalom (2005) endorses this instructional approach by identifying the power of observing group process, dynamics, and leadership through observation of group work in real, live settings and engaging in post-group question sessions with both the group leader(s) and the group members. Further, Luke and Hackney (2007) suggest that co-instructors exemplify the role of group leaders by openly exploring potential transference, comparing perspectives, and identifying potential leader bias and blind spots. These key elements are intentionally enveloped into the curriculum to support students' technical experience by learning how to facilitate groups in a collaborative manner.

### **Career Preparation and Instruction of Ethical Guidelines**

Standards (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2009) for counseling education have been established to ensure the development of a professional counselor identity and provide a curriculum that supports the ability for counseling students to successfully learn the skills necessary to practice counseling with integrity. The 2009 Standards denote that "curricular experiences and demonstrated knowledge in each of the eight common core areas are required of all students in the program" (CACREP, 2009, Section II, G). These standards delineate

professional orientation and ethical practice, social and cultural diversity, human growth and development, helping relationships, and group work as five of the eight elements necessary for successful completion of a CACREP accredited program that are addressed in this course (CACREP, 2009, Section II, G). The 2009 Standards also specifically define group work as “studies that provide both theoretical and experiential understandings of group purpose, development, dynamics, theories, methods, skills and other group approaches in a multicultural society” (CACREP, 2009, Section II, G, 6).

Within this proposed DH curriculum, principles such as group process and developmental stages, effective group leadership styles and characteristics, group literature and research, group counseling theories and approaches, and student effectiveness and evaluation are fully explored. Further, the humanistic nature of the course exposes students to a wide range of group types and ethical and legal considerations (CACREP, 2009, Section II, G, 6, a.-e). These elements are addressed in required readings, in supplemental readings, and by guest speakers to further incorporate both multicultural and advocacy competencies.

Engaging students in the pre-course group experience enables pre-professional counselors to develop a personal connection with the experience of being a group member by raising empathy and awareness toward potential future group clients. Students’ professional and ethical development is then further strengthened through journaling assignments that focus on this empathic sensitivity of the experience of the client by imagining being a future group leader and referencing their own experiences as a group member.

Following the guiding principles of the Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW; 2000), the construction and design of the DH approach provides opportunities for emerging group leaders to “clarify our professional niche, articulate our common values, and enhance the professionalism of group work training and practice” (Wilson, Rapin, & Haley-Banez, 2004, p. 19). This curriculum reflects the values and practices of the ASGW Best Practice Guidelines (1998), the ASGW Principles for Diversity-Competent Group Workers (1999), and the ASGW Professional Standards for the Training of Group Workers (2000).

Following the ASGW guidelines, the seven basic areas of knowledge and skill objectives offered include: the nature and scope of practice; assessment of group members and the social systems in which they live and work; planning group interventions; implementation of group interventions; leadership and co-leadership; evaluation, and ethical practice; best practice and diversity competence practice (ASGW, 2000). These competencies are addressed through readings on the nature of group dynamics, various group specializations, theories, and research literature supporting group efficacy. Activities teach assessment of group members, group planning, and implementation of skilled interventions within the classroom setting and through observation of live groups in community settings. By viewing real groups or videotapes while reflecting upon their own pre-course group experience, students consistently evaluate the application of these concepts, internalize the processes inherent to different stages of group functioning, and apply these concepts to various group specializations, such as psychoeducational, task-oriented, or psychotherapy groups.

Thus, the DH approach is grounded within the foundations of both CACREP and ASGW standards and is designed to foster the development of students’ knowledge,

skills, attitudes, and values (Wilson, et al., 2004). By utilizing the Diversity Principles (ASGW, 1999), the approach kindles diversity awareness, exposure, knowledge, and skills that serve as a foundation for further building of multicultural competence and recognition. The specific teaching philosophies and pedagogies utilized throughout the planning and execution of this course, as well as the relationships fostered within the classroom and group experiences, enhance an integration of these principles with the students' core learning.

## **Teaching Philosophy and Pedagogy**

### **Teaching Philosophy**

The DH curriculum is influenced by humanistic and experiential theory as it strives to uphold the concept that each student has the capacity and potential to learn and grow both personally and professionally. With the backing of research in cognitive developmental and constructivist theory, this approach brings dimension and enhancement to both the instructors' and students' understanding of therapy as it relates to the theory and practice of group counseling. As illuminated by Friere (1993), it is by the collective efforts of both instructors and students that all participants in the program may grow and learn.

The counselor education and supervision field has increased its attention to the development of learning models in context of constructivism and reflection theories, counselor development, and the needs of diverse learners (Fong, 1998). Supported poignantly by Nelson and Neufeldt (1998), the DH approach to group course instruction emphasizes a more holistic and non-positivistic teaching philosophy and counseling style beyond typical course instruction through book theory and skill sets. Our approach is therefore purposefully designed to promote the process of building a stronger sense of self in these blossoming counselors encapsulating humanistic philosophy, developmental pedagogy and instructional theory, multicultural and diversity pedagogy, and feminist pedagogy perspectives.

#### **Humanistic philosophy.**

A central tenet to the teaching philosophy of this curriculum is a firm belief in a humanistic worldview. Recognizing the humanity of both teacher and learner is inherent to the educational assumptions of this course, as postulated by Carl Rogers' (1969) humanistic approach to education. Much like many critical pedagogies, Rogers viewed the goal of education as the facilitation of change, and learning as the education of *the whole person*. He viewed experiential learning as the most significant aspect of education due to the pervasive personal nature of this type of learning, capable of influencing the total person, especially one's attitudes and beliefs. Rogers (1969) outlined 10 central educational assumptions, stating, "It is learning which leads the individual to becoming a more fully functioning person" (p. 48).

Following Rogers' view, the course instructor should serve as a facilitator by providing the environment and conditions in which meaningful, self-directed learning can occur. Rogers outlines several ways to instill such a prolific learning environment, including facilitation of students' self-actualization and feelings of personal adequacy,

recognition of the importance of human feelings, values, and perceptions in the educational process, and provision of a climate that is challenging, understanding, supportive, exciting, and free from threat (Rogers, 1969). By promoting a genuine concern and respect for the worth of others, these guidelines not only align with developmental, feminist, and multicultural pedagogies, but also intrinsically fit the goals and purposes of training in group work and are, therefore, reflected in this DH curriculum.

Palmer (1998) highlighted the growing interest in developing the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of teachers, the “inner landscape and integrity of the teacher,” (p. xvi) and emphasized making connections between themselves, their subject, and the students. Incorporating such dimensions in the teaching model better informs counselor education, including a focus on the “humanity of the teacher and learner” (Fong, 1998, p. 2), and providing a unifying thread to the teaching philosophy, style, and strategies employed in counselor education.

In more recent years, Nelson and Neufeldt (1998) denote an increasing tendency for counselor educators to focus course instruction more heavily on teaching skills and techniques, losing the art of teaching through the very interactions in class that could provide the most dynamic impact; numinous experience within the person-to-person context. These researchers remind counselor educators that, through concentrating on skills and techniques, they are, “missing the essence of a person-centered approach: that the individual is the source of his or her own resources and expertise when empathically understood and unconditionally accepted by a congruent person” (p. 304). The DH approach emphasizes the need for instructors to frame their approach to student engagement in this way to raise each student’s capacity for humanistic growth.

### **Developmental pedagogy and instructional theory.**

In order for counseling students to fully grasp the concepts, skills, dynamics, and processes of groups, the group instructor must reach the students on their cognitive level of understanding. In order to promote the opportunity for raising cognitive complexity in others, a balance of strong personal support, challenge, and reflection is required (Sprinthall, Peace, & Kennington, 1996). This curriculum’s developmental humanistic philosophy upholds that students may grow at varying stages. As well, this approach is specifically designed to address the need for structure and concrete concepts by beginning counselor trainees in that class instruction provides a high level of direction and strong, supportive guidance.

Stoltenberg’s (1981) theory of counseling supervision proposed that a vital element to promoting growth for beginning counseling students is to guide and monitor counselors’ heightened feelings of anxiety or critical incidents as markers of their learning experiences. The DH approach views counselor development as a map by which counselor educators can track counseling students’ progress and integration of skills, concepts, and professional growth (Stoltenberg, 2005). For example, instructors using this approach watch for milestones in counseling students’ progress and manage counseling students’ levels of anxiety by purposefully challenging students when they are introduced to increasing concept complexity through the course material and providing opportunities for resolving their anxiety through strong personal support. As a result, DH



instructors provoke developmental shifts in grasping increasingly complex concepts by building awareness of one's self and others.

Chickering (1981) developed a hierarchical structure of student development and cognitive growth, proposing seven "vectors" of college student development that present markers of growth as students construct knowledge and grow from one vector to the next. These vectors include achieving competence, managing emotions, developing autonomy, establishing identity, freeing interpersonal relationships, developing purpose, and developing integrity (Chickering, 1981). Counseling students may develop at different paces through these vectors but must strive to show progress in areas of group work competency.

Echoing similar concepts of building competency through a developmental process, Gillam (2004) proposed a model for group instruction using the acronym "PEDAGOGY" to create a frame of reference for group counseling instruction as an all-encompassing learning experience. The DH course is designed to promote these areas of competency by bringing in a seasoned group leader to facilitate the pre-course growth group and by emphasizing each counselor's ability to engage in self-reflection (Gillam, 2004). This curriculum also reflects the work of Guth and McDonnell (2004) through a structurally developmental approach to designing class activities around beginning, middle, and ending stages of the course development that meet levels of students' constructed understanding while stimulating further interest and presenting challenges that will nurture continued growth throughout the course.

The DH approach is thus purposefully structured to provide more complexity by increasing the level of autonomy after an appropriate time of observation, reading, and discussion. When planning course syllabi, counselor educators cannot ignore the importance of meeting group counseling students' needs as they grow intellectually. Researchers highlight this point by endorsing the implementation of more difficult material and exercises during the middle phase of course development. "As students develop their knowledge and skills over the course of a semester, these activities can tap increasingly more complex or advanced competencies" (Guth & McDonnell, 2004, p. 102). In addition, this curriculum is designed upon the concepts presented by Granello and Hazler (1998) who emphasize the importance for counselor development-based curriculum in counselor education, particularly meeting the needs of graduate-level students who are learning the art and craft of becoming counselors.

### **Multicultural and diversity pedagogy.**

The teaching philosophy, style, and strategy guiding the DH approach require the infusion of multicultural and diversity related aspects throughout. Multicultural and diversity issues are woven throughout the course material and then further expanded upon in subsequent program coursework as suggested by the ASGW (1999) Principles for Culturally-Competent Group Workers. Areas of competency for teaching cultural sensitivity and knowledge to counseling students include, "self-awareness, awareness of group members' world views, and culturally appropriate intervention strategies as key elements in being culturally competent" (Bemak & Chung, 2004, p. 33). This is also inherent to the prerequisite growth group course, which, when coupled with the in-class activities and experiences, fully addresses the recommended experiential component of best practice.

Diverse personal experiences and perspectives are encouraged in order for students to gain exposure to cultural diversity and a wide array of human experiences while considering how their own personal experiences shape their work with clients. From the beginning, the DH approach aims to inspire deep consideration for each student's personal counseling style as it relates to their own biases and racial identity in guiding their decisions. To best create this atmosphere, it is critical to ask students to process how their cultural uniqueness affected their own growth group experience to integrate and apply this personal awareness into future group counseling facilitation. In addition, Nelson and Neufeldt (1998) encourage pedagogical practices to build learning experiences that reach women and ethnic or racial minorities into curricula. Hence, this philosophy employs an integration of both humanistic and developmental perspectives along with multicultural and feminist teaching approaches in effort to better enhance the learning experience for female and minority students.

### **Feminist pedagogy.**

Enns and Forrest (2005) highlight the commonalities between multicultural and feminist pedagogies and propose an educational approach that integrates both into a critical teaching style, encompassing methods from each that “question and challenge existing knowledge base and power relations” (Ng, 1995, p.130). The DH educational approach integrates both multicultural and feminist pedagogies with the humanistic and developmental instructional approaches outlined. Furthermore, Friere (1993) identified three central, overlapping activities of critical pedagogies: (a) listening to the needs and perspectives of those who are oppressed, (b) using a problem-posing participatory dialogue, and (c) building upon the knowledge acquired through these processes to engage in positive changes and action. The first two of these activities can be addressed through humanistic and developmental teaching perspectives. Through the addition of both multicultural and feminist critical teaching approaches, the DH approach meets these tenets while also encapsulating the third, critical area of empowerment and social justice.

Specifically, Wallerstein (1987) outlines the problem posing technique as “a group process that draws on personal experience to create social connectedness and mutual responsibility” (Wallerstein, 1987, p. 34). This is first undertaken in the pre-course growth group where students are engaged as co-learners with the leader and are asked to question unconscious beliefs or ideas that they have previously blindly accepted (Hinchey, 1998). This continuous focus on students' self-reflection enables them to take this knowledge and convert it into action. Enns and Forrest (2005) outline a number of self-reflection techniques and activities that facilitate this “action-reflection-action cycle” (2005, p. 8) and are incorporated throughout the DH approach in both the pre-course growth group and the group course itself.

Feminist pedagogies serve to further expand the scope of knowledge and reflection gained in this course as they add in the critical domain of emotion to the acquisition of knowledge. Fisher (2001) outlined this “consciousness raising” during which both emotion and cognition are applied to the tasks of understanding experience and creating knowledge. DH instructors create classroom environments that invite participatory and interactive learning, emphasize the importance of building communication skills, and encourage students to collaboratively develop expertise and

understanding in the realm of group work (Enns & Forrest, 2005). Obidah (2000) summarizes the pedagogical role in this approach; to serve as “guide[s] who help students to acquire the necessary skills to negotiate unfamiliar territory and consider life experiences in light of class readings and discussions” (Enns & Forrest, 2005, p. 20).

## **Teaching Style and Strategy**

### **Role of the Instructor**

Within the DH approach, the instructor’s role is that of a leader, model, and collaborator with counselor education students. This leadership model promotes learning that is appropriate for the beginning developmental stages of counselor development. The instructor’s primary objective is to present group concepts, dynamics, and techniques to new counseling students by modeling the self as a group leader. Group counseling instructors have the unique opportunity to model specific dynamics in group process. These opportunities are viewed as a way to “convey group leader and member behaviors and connect them directly to how groups function” (Riva & Korinek, 2004, p.63). As an instructor of group process, one must purposefully point out interpersonal responses when they occur naturally in the classroom. This powerful instructional approach upholds the role of the instructor as a model group therapist, effectively exemplifying the therapeutic person-to-person connection for students.

### **Teaching Style and Methods**

Teaching style of group counseling is an important factor in successfully facilitating classroom learning through modeling, pausing, explaining, engaging, and collaborating in the learning process. Throughout the DH course, instructors utilize the prerequisite growth group as a springboard for discussion, journaling, and verbally processing the experience. The growth group is consistently referenced in order to accomplish two personal learning objectives: to foster personal growth experiences through which the students are universally connected (as are their clients) and to distinguish and value multiple perspectives in order to facilitate each counselor’s developmental growth and personal counseling style.

Two co-instructors use a collaborative, open discussion format to encourage questions and to process material in the here-and-now. A discussion-interaction format presents material in a concrete, organized manner, stimulating learning through active learning experiences. By relaying information from one student’s thoughts to the next student’s ideas in a circular fashion, this teaching style fosters both a guided and flowing atmosphere of learning didactic material. Instructors continually promote learning through interacting in the group process along with students to help them understand and integrate the material on a personal, meaningful level. Since this style follows a developmental constructivist model of building contextual understanding while promoting cognitive complexity (McAuliffe & Eriksen, 1999), instructors build upon students’ levels of conceptual constructions of the material by facilitating spontaneous experiences that inspire learning on both a personal and professional level.

## **Teaching Strategies**

This group work approach employs specific interactional, dynamic, and experiential strategies to promote enhanced learning and personal interaction with other students, as experiential learning activities have been shown to have a greater emotional impact on counselors in training than pure didactic course work (Furr & Carroll, 2003). Program influences further support building the professional skill and identity of counseling students by including social construction of knowledge, experiential learning, and opportunities for independent thinking in a supportive environment (McAuliffe, 2002). This teaching strategy utilizes frequent small groups and pairs to facilitate a personal connection with other students, thereby increasing students' ability to appreciate multiple experiences and viewpoints. Furthermore, Paulson & Faust (1998) support the use of "active and cooperative" learning strategies that go beyond merely supplementing standard lecture to extend contemplative and long-term learning of classroom material. In this way, the DH instructional strategy brings out a personal nature to learning from others that reflects the group therapy experience itself.

## **The Developmental Humanistic Curriculum in Practice**

### **Structuring the Learning Process**

Throughout this curriculum, a process of learning specific technical application of group skills and approaches is consistently outlined before instruction begins. The instruction of skills and techniques will be presented in outline format on handouts given to students before each class discussion (see Figure 1).

- Normalizing Leader Anxiety
  - Live Counseling (Students)
  - Coaching In The Moment (Instructor)
- Group Process & Stages
  - Group growth & recognizing stages
  - Seeing when the group is "stuck"
- Teaching "What To Do When..."
  - Active Listening & Reflection
  - In and Out
  - Zig-Zagging & Connecting
  - Challenging Members & Resistance
- Partnering in the Process
  - Learning Together
  - Virtual Reality of Leading a Group Experience
- Practice Makes Perfect!
  - Learn by Doing
  - Reflecting in the Here and Now

*Figure 1. Skill Development and Techniques.*

## **Student Assessment and Evaluation**

Clear and specific methods of measuring student performance are illustrated in the syllabus and reviewed with students at the beginning of the course. Enns & Forrest (2005) illustrate a number of evaluation strategies that are congruent with the pedagogy and teaching style that have been incorporated into the DH curriculum. Some examples include an evaluation option in which all members of a group contribute to a product and receive a group grade and student-teacher narrative conducted in reflective journals, process notes, and instructor feedback.

## **Course Evaluation**

Course evaluations are conducted via informal classroom surveys administered at points throughout the prerequisite group and the group course itself. Samples of such instruments are included in the syllabus. Additionally, in keeping with the spirit of the DH approach teaching style and philosophy, students are encouraged to share ideas on the course structure, goals, and activities with the instructors at all points during course work.

## **Conclusion**

The Developmental Humanistic (DH) approach outlines a model for teaching group work as one of the core introductory experiences undertaken by incoming counselors-in-training. As such, it is vital to establish a firm footing upon which students and the program will build. In keeping with the teaching philosophies upon which it is grounded, the DH approach embraces goals consistent with those outlined by bell hooks (1994) in her definition of *engaged pedagogy*. Value is placed upon the whole of the student and instructors strive to stimulate and share students' "intellectual and spiritual growth" (hooks, 1994, p. 13). Through open dialogue and continual self-reflection, DH group course instructors aim to enable students to focus on new and emerging knowledge, thus allowing them the opportunity to develop their own voices (Baxter Magolda, 1992).

In conclusion, the DH approach relies on strategies and methods that not only give students a solid conceptual foundation and practical experience in the practice of group work but also foster a personal connection and mutual construction of knowledge between instructors and students. This multifaceted process promotes students' reflection, challenges their beliefs, attitudes, and values, and puts them on a steady course toward becoming well-developed, self-aware, growth-seeking individuals prepared and eager to enter into the counseling profession and serve those in the community and global context in which they work and live.

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