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Tenure-track faculty at most universities in the country are faced with responsibilities of significant teaching loads, service to the university and community, and robust research endeavors. For many, these charges are ambiguously weighted, leaving the assistant professor wondering, “How will I ever achieve promotion and tenure?” Scholars have written of the challenges of achieving merit in all three academic foci, offering support to those who may feel the journey is impossible (Adams, 2002; Fogg, 2003; McClain, 2003; Wells, 2003), however, there is little offered in the direction of how one achieves a balance among teaching responsibilities, research endeavors, and service activities. Even at universities where teaching is considered paramount, the pressures that faculty face often make it difficult to focus on “good teaching.” Teaching, while crucial to the academic integrity of a university, is often the last thing considered when making decisions about faculty promotion and tenure (Keltner, 1998). In fact, Keltner (1998) states that “the promotion of the teacher from instructor up the system to full professor is based primarily on research, publication, community service, and political correctness” (p. 171).

Achieving a balance between the roles of a university professor, while still maintaining a sense of personal freedom and sanity requires us to think about faculty roles a bit differently. Creative processes come into play as we consider how to combine the elements of teaching, research and service in order to prevent the assistant professor in pursuit of promotion and tenure from feeling as if he or she signed on for three jobs
instead of one. Carroll (2003) suggests that faculty reconsider their professional roles by engaging in the following:

- Choosing appropriate subjects for research;
- Seeking closer integration between scholarship and teaching;
- Working to discover more creative possibilities for using institutional and personal resources;
- Going beyond the scholarship of discovery;
- Admitting to—and building on—the connections between the personal and the professional;
- Exploring ways that some service goals might connect with research and teaching goals; and
- Establishing human connections to scholarship. (p. 24)

Based on the aforementioned premises, the current article offers a way to incorporate the elements of teaching, research, and service in a counselor education department by proposing to offer a university-sponsored workshop for couples. The process of developing the workshop itself and the steps included in the approval process, both at the university level and through the university’s Institutional Review Board, are described. Potential benefits to the community and students within the Counselor Education Department are also proposed, as well as suggestions for future directions and possible modifications to fit different research and teaching styles.

**Teaching and Service Combined**

Counselor educators, while primarily trained in counseling theory and practice, also pride themselves on being excellent teachers. It only makes sense that counselor educators would combine their strengths in teaching with their skills in counseling to create a classroom environment conducive to student growth and development. Counselor educators can take the skills that they bring to the classroom a step further by considering how they might contribute their unique abilities to a population of consumers both within and outside higher education. A workshop setting allows the counselor educator to utilize teaching skills, while also facilitating personal growth and development, in a manner that reaches beyond the university, and touches areas of the community that may not otherwise be reached. This article proposes that workshops, offered by the university through an outreach and continuing education department, have the potential to reach participants in a variety of settings: current students, graduate and undergraduate; couples who might be reluctant to enter counseling; couples who are interested in relationship education as well as relationship enhancement; and counselors in the community who work with couples and want to both improve their interpersonal relationships as well as better serve their clients. Furthermore, practitioners attending the workshop could use the hours towards their continuing education units required by their respective licensing boards, assuming the department is certified by the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) to offer continuing education units to area providers.
Student Mentorship/Training

Counselor educators conducting a university-based workshop expand their reach beyond the students in the Counselor Education Department, and they also serve to provide an additional training opportunity for students pursuing master’s degrees in counselor education. Students in the Counselor Education Department who are concurrently enrolled in practicum or internship courses can be selected and invited to co-facilitate the workshop with the primary faculty instructor/researcher. This opportunity provides the students with additional training in an area of expertise, live supervision of their work with the participants enrolled in the workshop, and a diverse setting from which to gather direct hours towards completion of practicum and internship requirements. In addition, students gain practical experience in planning and coordination, group facilitation, and data collection. Students are expected to prepare for the workshop by reading assigned materials, meeting with the faculty instructor for at least one training session prior to the workshop, attending the workshop in its entirety, and facilitating break-out sessions as designated by the workshop format.

Research Opportunities

Conducting a university-based workshop provides a plethora of research opportunities. Because the workshop is funded and marketed by the university’s outreach and continuing education program, there are minimal expenses involved in conducting the workshop, not to mention that the primary faculty instructor can be paid the equivalent of up to one credit of instruction for offering the workshop, depending on the institution and funding options available. Graduate assistants from the Counselor Education Department can be enlisted to collect, organize, assist with data entry, and assist with collecting follow-up data from the participants. The types of data collected would obviously be determined by the focus and purpose of the researcher: In the current workshop format, couples are asked to complete a series of assessments prior to the start of the workshop, at the end of the workshop, and at 6-month follow-up. These assessments include: the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, 1988), a seven-item global measure of relationship satisfaction; the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (LWMAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959), a 15-item global measure of marital adjustment; the A. R. E. Questionnaire (Johnson, 2008), a 15-item exercise designed to help couples explore perceptions of accessibility, responsiveness, and emotional engagement of each partner; and the Couple Behavior Report (CBR; Shumway & Wampler, 2002), a 36-item scale designed to measure specific behaviors present in a couple relationship.

Despite the extensive research conducted on the effectiveness of couples counseling intervention techniques, there is limited research conducted on the effectiveness of working with couples in a group setting. Of the few studies conducted, however, group couples counseling did show to be as effective as either individual, conjoint, or non-spouse group formats (Kaiser, Hahlweg, Fehm-Wolfsdorf, & Groth, 1998; Zimmerman, Prest, &Wetzel, 1997). The primary research purpose of the proposed project is to analyze the impact of the couples workshop in the areas of relationship satisfaction, relationship adjustment, attachment, and relationship behaviors. The authors do not yet have research results to share, as the workshop did not garner sufficient enrollment to be offered in a university setting. However, the workshop has been
approved to be offered in the upcoming year through an adult community education program.

**Brief Workshop Description**

A group setting for working with couples is proposed for several reasons. Not only does it give the couples a chance to share their stories with couples experiencing similar difficulties, but couples who would not initially seek couples therapy may still wish to work on their relationship in a group/workshop format. The group/workshop format of this design has been shown to be less threatening to couples and the cost to each couple will be more reasonable than individual psychotherapy (Kaiser et al., 1998). In addition, it could be helpful for couples to receive education not only from the counselors, but from each other about ways to successfully work through problems. Couples also gain the satisfaction of helping other couples. Finally, it could be more effective to recognize problems in one’s relationship if pointed out by other couples, as opposed to suggestions from only one counselor (Kilgo, 1975).

Yalom (1995) identifies universality as one of the important therapeutic factors working within a group. Couples hearing the difficulties that other couples face can lessen their distress and instill hope for change (another of Yalom’s therapeutic factors). This group format consists of many parts. Couples have the opportunity to hear each other’s stories as well as form a network of support for each other. There is some psycho-educational material presented from current research and theory on couple interactions. The couples are asked to participate in several break-out sessions, facilitated by counselor education students, within the group setting as well as complete homework assignments outside of group. The models of couples therapy most strongly used in developing this workshop are primarily Gottman Method Couples Therapy (Gottman, 2007) and Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (Johnson, 2004; 2008).

The workshop consists of three 5-hour evening sessions that take place over the course of 6 weeks, occurring every other Friday: allowing couples an opportunity to complete homework and readings, as well as practice what they have learned in the workshop between sessions. The workshop schedule could be altered depending on convenience and feedback received from participants. It is scheduled in this manner to accommodate couples who work and to not impose upon an entire weekend. Holding sessions on Friday nights is meant to mimic “date night,” while not imposing upon plans the couples might have for weekend/family activities. A general outline of topics to be covered during each of the three sessions is outlined below.

**Session 1:**
- Introduction and overview of couples work
- Identifying strengths and recognizing destructive patterns

**Session 2:**
- Communication skills
- Conflict resolution
- Gender differences in communication styles
- Repair after a conflict
Session 3: Building/strengthening marital friendship
Trust and intimacy
Finding shared meaning
Maintaining new skills

Method

The following describes the method by which the primary researcher gained approval to offer the workshop at her university of employment. The process may differ significantly based on the resources of the individual university, as well as the required process of approval both by the university to offer the workshop, and by the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

The primary researcher presented the original idea of offering a university-sponsored workshop for couples to the chair of the Outreach and Continuing Education Department at Winona State University-Rochester. The Outreach and Continuing Education Department (OCED) offers a series of workshops to students and community providers each semester, many of which are conducted by Counselor Education Department faculty and community partners. A formal proposal was drafted and presented, outlining the specifics of the workshop, including dates, times, credit offerings, enrollment requirements, the research component, as well as ethical considerations. Once approved by OCED, with revisions made as appropriate, the workshop was scheduled and marketed by the coordinator of OCED. Marketing included flyers distributed across campus and in community settings (i.e., coffee shops, churches, and community mental health centers). The primary researcher also contacted area counseling professionals via email inviting them to share the workshop information with their clients, as well as inviting them to participate themselves.

The IRB approval process was fairly simple and straightforward. Winona State University utilizes IRBNet (www.irbnet.org) for all research applications. A research purpose and proposal was submitted, along with all marketing materials, informed consent procedures, and instruments used to collect data. Co-researchers were able to access the website under a shared project name, and all documents submitted were accessible by all parties. Both researchers completed a human subjects module, verifying that they were trained to conduct ethical research. The application was completed in stages and submitted, when complete, by the primary researcher. Approval was granted online for one year following the application date.

While the workshop described herein did not garner the enrollment necessary to offer it through the university, the workshop has been accepted and is currently being scheduled by a community education program for potential registration in upcoming months. Like OCED, the community education partners offer a venue for the workshop, marketing of the materials, a small stipend to instructors, and the capability of reaching perhaps more consumers than were reached by the university. It is expected that the workshop will still include the components described here – graduate student co-facilitators, a research component, and a format amenable to both the instructor teaching style and attendee learning style. For programs that do not have access to a continuing education department, faculty members could seek sponsorship from the department, a
university clinic, or a local community agency. The second author is pursuing departmental sponsorship at her institution.

**Ethical Considerations**

A number of ethical considerations should be addressed in planning and implementing this type of workshop. In the workshop proposed by the authors, the instructor will follow typical informed consent procedures, including discussion of confidentiality and the limits thereof, information about the instructor credentials, and the training component of the workshop with graduate students under faculty supervision. Additionally, if couples present with issues that warrant a referral to a couples’ and/or individual therapist in the community, the instructor will provide information and assistance in accessing resources as appropriate. Couples will be offered the opportunity to participate in a research component evaluating the effectiveness of the workshop. It is made clear that participation in the research component is voluntary. Graduate research assistants will assist in collecting data and conducting post-workshop interviews to avoid any confounding of the results due to the researcher/workshop instructor dual roles.

**Conclusion & Future Directions**

The specific details of the program, including schedule, costs, workshop curriculum, and instruments for data collection, can all be modified based on sponsorship (e.g., availability of workshop space, funding), faculty research interests, areas of expertise, or training needs of the students involved. The model presented here is simply one example of a program developed by the authors and scheduled to be offered in the near future. Faculty members considering this type of program should brainstorm how they will overcome the potential obstacles of recruiting participants, deciding on reasonable fees and schedule, and obtaining resources (e.g., space, supplies, etc.).

The authors acknowledge that there is risk involved when preparing a workshop such as this. The time that goes into preparing to offer a workshop that may or may not garner the enrollment necessary to run is a real consideration. The proposal process, IRB application, and marketing can be time-consuming, however, were not wasted efforts. While the workshop did not attract sufficient enrollment in the original setting for which it was intended, the materials were modified and proposed to another venue which also assists with marketing. The authors encourage those considering a workshop such as this to seek a venue that will assist with setup and marketing. It is not unreasonable, however, for a counselor educator who is well-connected within a university system and community to market a workshop that is meant to serve the wide variety of consumers that this workshop is meant to serve. The authors feel as though this is a worthwhile endeavor, as relationship enhancement ultimately supports a healthy community.

The tenure-track is a challenging one, and faculty members are encouraged to “think smarter, not harder” about ways to accomplish vita-worthy tasks in the areas of teaching, research, and service. The authors propose that a community workshop offering is one way of addressing this trifecta in a way that is rewarding for faculty members, students, and community members.
References


*Note: This paper is part of the annual VISTAS project sponsored by the American Counseling Association. Find more information on the project at: http://counselingoutfitters.com/vistas/VISTAS_Home.htm*
Appendix A

COMBINING TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND SERVICE BY OFFERING A UNIVERSITY-SPONSORED WORKSHOP FOR COUPLES 
ACES, 2011, NASHVILLE, TN

The Teaching-Research-Service Trifecta
- Benefits of triple-dipping!
- Valuable service to community.
- Training/mentoring opportunity, especially for students interested in couple/family work—they can gain coordination, presentation, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript submission experience.
- Research opportunities—conference presentations and manuscript possibilities.

Purpose and Description of the Workshop
This workshop is intended to offer a psycho-educational, experiential, credit earning option for couples wanting to improve and enhance communication, intimacy, compatibility, and closeness in their relationships. This course will include lecture, guided instruction in building relationship skills, experiential relationship-building activities, small- and large-group activities, and follow-up within the group setting. Couples will learn to interact more effectively and thoughtfully with each other, and will also benefit by learning from other couples in the group. Materials utilized to build workshop curriculum will include the works of John Gottman and Susan Johnson, combining the research-based approaches of cognitive-behavioral and emotion-focused therapies in working with couples.
- Three 5-hour sessions spaced out over 6 weeks—for instance, every other Friday from 4-9 pm.
- 10-15 couples (20-30 total participants).

Supervised Clinical Practice Experience for Counseling Graduate Students
Current graduate students from the Counselor Education Department who are enrolled in practicum or internship experiences will serve as co-facilitators, under the close clinical supervision of the instructor. This will not only make it possible to accommodate larger numbers, but will provide current CED students with a clinical experience that they can apply towards completion of the practicum/internship required practice hours.

Research Component
Couples will be offered the opportunity to participate in a research component evaluating the effectiveness of the workshop in promoting healthier coping styles, communication patterns, and satisfaction in the relationship. Upon obtaining informed consent from each couple, a series of assessments will be administered prior to beginning the workshop. At the completion of the workshop, the same assessments will again be administered and compared to pre-workshop scores. Couples will be invited to participate in a 6-month follow-up phone interview and mailed surveys assessing the longitudinal impact of the
workshop. Graduate research assistants in CED will assist in collecting data and conducting post-workshop interviews to avoid any confounding of the results due to the researcher/workshop instructor dual roles.

Assessments include
- Relationship Assessment Scale (global measure of relationship satisfaction).
- Locke-Wallace (more detailed measure of marital adjustment).
- Couple Behavior Report (measure of specific behaviors present in current relationship).

Steps to Make it Happen
- IRB process
- Determine who is sponsoring workshop
- Determine location, dates, times
- Choose assessment instruments
- Choose/develop curriculum
- Market the workshop
- Train graduate student facilitators

Overcoming Obstacles
- Recruiting participants
  - Need both partners to commit to workshop
  - Time commitment – three 5-hour sessions
  - Cost
- Registration fees—how to decide on cost that is not prohibitive for participants, but reasonable for workshop facilitator?
- Resources needed (e.g., location, AV equipment, paper supplies, printing costs)—is it sponsored by department, by university clinic, by university continuing education office?
- Potential conflicts of interest—facilitator as researcher?

Discussion Questions
- What ideas do you have for recruiting participants?
- What ideas do you have for finding a sponsor (if your university does not have a Continuing Education Department or office)?
- What other ideas do you have for potential curricula?
- What kind of experiences have you had with utilizing graduate students as co-facilitators?