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# Perceptions of Counseling Integration: A Survey of Counselor Educators

## **Abstract**

Counselor educators were surveyed in order to assess their knowledge of integrative counseling approaches, their views regarding the importance of such approaches, and how much emphasis on integrative counseling is given in their counseling courses. A large majority of participants reported that integration in counseling is very important and that they emphasize it in their teaching of counseling theories and/or methods courses. Implications of these findings are discussed, including suggestions for counselor educators and counseling journals.

# Perceptions of Counseling Integration: A Survey of Counselor Educators

Andre Marquis, Deborah Hudson, and Mike Tursi

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Counselor educators were surveyed in order to assess their knowledge of integrative counseling approaches, their views regarding the importance of such approaches, and how much emphasis on integrative counseling is given in their counseling courses. A large majority of participants reported that integration in counseling is very important and that they emphasize it in their teaching of counseling theories and/or methods courses. Implications of these findings are discussed, including suggestions for counselor educators and counseling journals.

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Despite broad recognition that theories are indispensable to effective counseling (Corey, 2009; Corsini and Wedding, 2010; Fall, Holden and Marquis, 2010; Prochaska and Norcross, 2003), very little definitive research demonstrates the *consistent* superiority of one counseling approach over the others (Asay and Lambert, 2003; Hubble, Duncan, and Miller, 1999; Wampold, 2001). Confronted with an excess of 400 different forms of counseling/psychotherapy (Karasu, 1986) and a growing chasm separating research and practice (Miller, 2004) counselors and other mental health professionals are often perplexed about which approach to use with a given client (Castonguay, 2005). Whereas the single-school, or pure-form, theoretical approaches have historically competed for dominance (Norcross, 2005), psychologists and other mental health professionals have been *integrating* these approaches for decades (Goldfried, 1982).

Five different integrative approaches – each with different sub-types – have been developed and are now well-established: eclectic, common factors, theoretical

integration, assimilative integration, and metatheoretical integration. *Eclecticism* involves tailoring treatment for each individual and her specific issues, guided not by theoretical principles but by what has been beneficial in previous work, whether based on past experience or empirical research (Beutler and Clarkin, 1990; Lazarus, 2003; Norcross, 1986a). The *common factors approach* emphasizes that a significant percentage of the effectiveness of the different counseling approaches is due to what diverse approaches have *in common* with one another, as opposed to their unique, specific differences; thus, similar to eclecticism, it affords the ability to draw from interventions from numerous theoretical approaches (Beitman, 2003; Frank, 1982; Garfield, 2003; Hubble, et al., 1999; Rosenweig, 1936; Wampold, 2001). *Theoretical integration* involves the integration – at a deep theoretical level -- of two or more of the pure-form approaches, along with their associated interventions (Ryle, 1990; Wachtel, 1977). *Assimilative integration* involves counselors who – while being firmly grounded in a single, preferred

counseling approach – include and incorporate (assimilate) interventions or perspectives from other counseling approaches into one’s preferred mode of theory and practice (Messer, 2003; Safran, 1998; Stricker and Gold, 1996). Finally, *metatheoretical integration* involves creating theoretical frameworks of a more comprehensive order - at a higher level of abstraction - than traditional single theories; because of this higher level of abstraction, metatheories operate from a conceptual space beyond the single-school theories such that “the current relativism [of eclecticism] can be transcended by discovering or constructing concepts that cut across the traditional boundaries of the psychotherapies” (Prochaska and Norcross, 2003, p. 515; Prochaska and DiClemente, 1984; Mahoney, 1991; and Wilber, 2000). Scholarly attention to integrative issues is certainly present in counseling literature; examples of integration in counseling include Corey (2009), Fernando (2007), Hansen (2000, 2002) and Kelly (1991).

However, in contrast to psychology, there appears to be less focused, formal, and sustained attention to integrative issues. For example, *The Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration* (SEPI) held its first congress in 1985; SEPI has held annual international conferences every year since; and journals that are devoted exclusively to the issue of psychotherapy integration have been published for more than two decades: *International Journal of Eclectic Psychotherapy*, which was published from 1982-1986 and then changed its name to *Journal of Integrative and Eclectic Psychotherapy* (published from 1987-present), and *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration* (published from 1991-present by the American Psychological Association). This relative lack of attention to integration in counseling is surprising, given that the thrust of integrative counseling/psychotherapy is consistent with the counseling profession’s values of viewing and responding to clients in a culturally-sensitive, holistic manner.

Moreover, integrative issues are tremendously fertile with regards to theoretical, practical, and research issues. Our hypothesis was that many counselor educators may be unaware of significant, clinically relevant developments in the integration movement. Thus, students graduating from counseling programs could be served by more focused attention to integrative approaches in their counseling programs. This research project had three main goals: first, to assess counselor educators’ views regarding the importance of integration; second, to ascertain how knowledgeable counselor educators are about approaches to integrative counseling; and third, to determine how much emphasis they place upon integrative approaches when they teach and/or supervise counselors-in-training.

## Methods

### Participants

Because the population of interest in this study was counselor educators, the entire membership of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) was sampled. An email list of all ACES members (1820 email addresses) was purchased. However, 801 of those email addresses never reached their addressee (763 were “failed delivery status notifications”; 25 were out of the office replies; and 13 people replied stating they were not [or no longer] counselor educators). Two reminder emails were sent to encourage those who had not yet completed the survey to please do so; the first reminder was four weeks after the initial email and the second reminder was eight weeks after the initial email. The survey appears to have been received by 1019 counselor educators, of which 416 participated, representing a 41% response rate. Although some standard mail surveys involving issues of theoretical orientation, eclecticism and integration in the 1980s and 1990s received response rates between 58%-62% (Jensen, Bergen and Greaves,

1990; Norcross and Prochaska, 1982, 1988), response rates to surveys, in general, and particularly, web-based surveys, have been declining in the last two decades. For example, Sheenan (2001) examined response rates for email surveys since 1986 and found a decline from an average of 46% in 1995 to 31% in 1999. Likewise, Bachmann, Elfrink and Vazzana (1999) reported a similar decrease in response rates for an identical survey completed in 1995 and again in 1998. Thus, it appears that our 41% response rate compares favorably with recent trends in survey research.

Participants read an information letter and provided their informed consent by clicking a button on the web-based *Survey Monkey*. The final section of the survey, which was completed by 308 participants, involved demographic questions. Of those completing the demographic section of the survey, 65% were women and 35% were men. Participants' ethnicities were: African-American (4%); Hispanic-American (1%); Latino/Latina (1%); Asian-American (4%); Native-American (1%); Caribbean-American (.3%); Anglo (74%); and 15% "other" of which the largest group was multi-ethnic (8%). Participants' ages were as follows: 25-29 (10%); 30-39 (24%); 40-49 (27%); 50-59 (25%); 60+ (14%). The procedures and methods of this study were approved by the University of Rochester's Human Subjects Review Board.

The researchers were able to include only counselor educators – in contrast to ACES members who are students, practitioners, and/or field supervisors – in their data analysis because question 2 asked each participant "Do you teach either theories or methods/techniques courses?" Of the 416 participants, 260 reported teaching theories or methods/techniques courses; these are the participants whose responses are reported in this article because they are the ones most likely to impact the preparation of counselors-in-training.

## Instrument and Procedures

Participants responded to a researcher-created questionnaire designed to elicit their views of, and knowledge regarding, integrative counseling approaches as well as how much emphasis on integrative counseling is given in their counseling program. "Integrative counseling" and "counseling integration" were defined in the cover letter as those counseling approaches that do not limit themselves to strict adherence to a pure-form or single-school approach to counseling, such as *strictly* person-centered, cognitive, or existential approaches. The survey was piloted on 15 ACES members and their feedback unanimously communicated that the survey instrument possessed face validity.

A survey design was chosen for the study because the desired information needed to come from actual counselor educators (Fink, 2009). The items on the survey included two forced-choice questions (yes or no); five Likert scale questions that were most often either "completely negative," "somewhat negative," "neutral," "somewhat positive," and "completely positive," or "completely disagree," "somewhat disagree," "neutral," "somewhat agree," or "completely agree;" and four multiple choice items. In addition, two open-ended questions were also included. Given that the purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of the views of only one group (counselor educators) as opposed to comparing groups or predicting outcomes, descriptive statistics were determined to be the most appropriate tool for the quantitative data analysis (Fink, 2009). The quantitative results section will thus report the percentage of participants who responded a given way to each question, including any missing values or unanswered questions.

The qualitative data from the responses to the question "If there is anything else about the issue of integrative counseling that you want to share, please do so below" were analyzed following the guidelines of Bogdan and Biklen (1998) and Creswell and Plano Clark (2007). In the

preliminary, exploratory stage of data analysis, the responses were initially read several times, and memos were written in the margins as a preliminary step to developing a qualitative codebook (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). On the third and subsequent readings, various words and phrases stood out and were often repeatedly encountered; these phrases became the initial coding categories. This process was performed numerous times, and each subsequent time the coding categories were either modified, new categories developed, or old categories discarded. Toward the end of this process, the codes were divided into major codes and subcodes (i.e., smaller categories within the major code; Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). At this point each major code was also assigned a label and Roman numeral, and each subcode was assigned a label and an alphabetic letter; the Roman numerals and letters were subsequently written next to each phrase or "unit of data" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998, p. 182) that corresponded to that specific category.

## Results

### Quantitative

The responses to the first question "How important do you believe integrating the different counseling approaches is?" indicate that counselor educators believe that integration is very important. The percentage of respondents who identified integration as "very important" or "extremely important" was 81.9%; in contrast, only 4.5% indicated that integration is "minimally important" or "not at all important" while 13.5% indicated that integration is "somewhat important." In response to the question "When you teach graduate-level counseling theories and/or methods courses, to what extent do you emphasize the integration of the different approaches to counseling?" 71.6% reported that they emphasize the integration of different approaches "completely" or "quite a bit;" in contrast, only 9.6% stated that they emphasized

integration "A little" or "Not at all," while 16.2% reported emphasizing integration "Somewhat;" 2.6% of participants skipped this question.

In response to the question that asked participants to mark the box next to those forms of integrative counseling that they believe they are competent to teach and/or supervise, more respondents identified themselves as competent to teach theoretical integration than other forms of integration (69.3%). Respondents identified themselves as competent to teach other forms as follows: Systematic or technical eclecticism (56.1%), common factors approach (45.1%), metatheoretical integration (22.5%) and assimilative integration (16.8%). Sixteen participants (6.2%) responded that they were not competent to teach any of the identified forms of integration.

The majority of respondents (82.0%) indicated that they distinguish between integrative and eclectic counseling approaches. Question six asked participants to "Mark the box that best matches your evaluation of *single-school* (pure-form/non-integrative) therapies." Question seven asked participants to "Mark the box that best matches your evaluation of *eclectic* counseling approaches (using interventions from different counseling approaches based upon a *pragmatic* basis – such as what has worked in the past with similar clients -- rather than based upon a consistent theoretical rationale)." Question eight asked participants to "Mark the box that best matches your evaluation of *integrative* counseling approaches (using interventions from different counseling approaches based upon *conceptual* principles and practice that transcends merely combining different counseling approaches)." The responses to questions six-eight are presented in Table 1. Ninety-one percent of the participants reported positive evaluations of integrative counseling approaches, in contrast to 47.9% and 26.2% for eclectic and single-school approaches, respectively.

When asked to mark the box of the approach they generally counsel or

counseled with, the vast majority of respondents reported an integrative or eclectic approach. Responses were: “I generally counsel/counseled with an integrative approach” (75.6%); “I generally counsel/counseled with an eclectic approach” (14.2%); “I generally counsel/counseled with the same approach (i.e., cognitive, existential, psychodynamic) with all of my clients” (10.2%). Thus, more than five times as many respondents reported practicing integratively than eclectically and more than seven times as many respondents reported practicing integratively than from the same (non-eclectic or non-integrative) approach.

Respondents were then asked to identify the approaches that they *currently teach* in their theories and/or methods courses; the results were: 1) Person-centered, 85.8%; 2) cognitive-behavioral, 82.2%; 3) Adlerian, 74.1%; 4) existential, 73.6% ; 5/6) gestalt, 68.5% ; 5/6) rational emotive behavior therapy, 68.5%; 7) cognitive, 66.0%; 8/9) family systems 65.5%; 8/9) behavioral, 65.5%; 10) reality 63.5%; 11) psychodynamic 61.9%; 12) integrative 56.3%; 13/14) constructivist 52.8%; 13/14) narrative, 52.8%; 15) feminist, 52.3; 16) multimodal, 34.0%; 17) Jungian, 33.5%; 18) eclectic, 27.4%; 19) transactional analysis, 21.3%; 20) transpersonal, 12.7%; and 21) integral, 7.1% (see Figure 1).

When asked to “Please mark the box(es) next to the area(s) that you draw upon when you educate and/or supervise counselors,” responses were: 1) psychology, 93.3%; 2) human development, 89.2%; 3) spirituality, 63.7%; 4) philosophy, 55.2%; 5) literature, 45.7%; 6) psychiatry, 35.0%; 7) sociology, 29.6%; and 8) social work, 23.3% (see Figure 2). Some respondents (22%) marked “other;” of those, virtually all of the responses were either “personal experience” or “counseling literature/theory” (“counseling” was not included as an option because – given that all respondents were *counselor* educators – they were presumed to teach primarily from counseling literature).

Participants were asked to “Please provide the name of the person(s) you most associate with each integrative approach below.” With the exception of the last question, far more participants skipped this item than any of the other items (only 113 out of 260 participants completed this item; see Table 2). Exemplars of *systematic or technical eclecticism* include Lazarus (2003), Norcross (1986a) and Beutler and Clarkin (1990). Forty-four participants wrote Lazarus, one wrote Norcross, and one wrote Beutler; 17 participants entered names other than the above exemplars; and 50 participants wrote “I don’t know,” “N/A,” “no one person,” or “no one.” Exemplars of the *common factors approach* include Frank (1982), Rosenweig (1936), Garfield (2003), Beitman (2003), Hubble, Duncan, and Miller (1999), and Wampold (2001). Fifteen participants wrote Hubble, Duncan, and/or Miller; five wrote Frank; two wrote Garfield; two wrote Rosenweig; and one wrote Beitman; 36 participants entered names other than the above exemplars; and 52 participants wrote “I don’t know,” “N/A,” “no one person,” or “no one.” Exemplars of *theoretical integration* include Wachtel (1977) and Ryle (1990). Six participants wrote Wachtel; 52 participants entered names other than the above exemplars; and 55 participants wrote “I don’t know,” “N/A,” “no one person,” or “no one.” Exemplars of *assimilative integration* include Messer (2003), Safran (1998), and Stricker and Gold (1996). Seven participants wrote Messer; two wrote Gold; 16 participants entered names other than the above exemplars; and 88 participants wrote “I don’t know,” “N/A,” “no one person,” or “no one.” Exemplars of *metatheoretical integration* include Prochaska and DiClemente (1984) and Wilber (2000). Ten participants wrote either Prochaska and/or DiClemente; three wrote Wilber; 16 participants entered names other than the above exemplars; and 84 participants wrote “I don’t know,” “N/A,” “no one person,” or “no one.”

Sixty-eight participants responded to the last question: “If there is anything else

about the issue of integrative counseling that you want to share, please do so below.” The major codes that emerged from the responses included: the importance of integration in training counseling students; the timing of introducing integration to students; concerns about integration not being implemented in a systematic manner; and admissions regarding their lack of knowledge of integration.

### *The importance of integration in training counseling students*

Examples of comments for the major code “the importance of integration in training counseling students” included: “I think it’s very important to train and supervise counselors in integrative counseling;” “I have developed, with colleagues, an integrative model based on our practice experience. It has been amazingly helpful to our trainees;” and “...integration provides a shared clinical language, helps to demonstrate client progress, and provides accountability.” This major code also included three subcodes: inadequacy of current resources (given the importance of integration); ethical concerns relating to not being integrative; and the importance of metatheories in integration. Examples of comments for the subcode of “inadequacy of current resources” included: “I would like to see more research and textbooks available in this area. I believe students and faculty would benefit from having such coursework as a requirement;” “There are not enough classes in regular programs that discuss integration, although I believe this is what most clinicians do in practice;” and “The survey is interesting – my hope is that this is some small step toward getting rid of our present texts and thinking and moving to a totally new approach.” Examples of comments for the subcode of “ethical concerns related to not being integrative” included: “I moved this way (toward integration) many years ago but find younger colleagues unable to move beyond „theory of choice” which is about the counselor and NOT the client. I think this

represents a serious ethical concern regarding training and counseling;” and “I believe it is important to be open to client differences, which may require you to step outside of your own (single-school) personal theory.” Examples of comments for the subcode of “importance of metatheories in integration” included: “It is important for the counseling field to be moving to a unified metatheory...” and “counselor educators would do well to teach the principles of critical thinking and metatheoretical evaluation so that future counselors can knowingly participate in ongoing integration.”

### *The timing of introducing integration to students*

In line with Castonguay (2005), respondents who commented on the major code “the timing of introducing integration to students” always preferred introducing students to single approaches before integrative approaches. This major code included two subcodes: the necessity of learning single-school approaches before integrative approaches and students’ developmental status. Examples of comments for the subcode “the necessity of learning single-school approaches before integrative approaches” included: “New counselors-in-training must learn at least one theory well before they can truly „integrate” other theories in a systematic, thorough manner. It is important to help counselors-in-training understand that process;” “It’s been my experience that students need to have a basic understanding of first-generation theories before they can intelligently integrate them. Thus, an introductory theories and methods course is not the place to delve into types of integrative and eclectic approaches;” and “I think that students need to understand theories from a basic perspective first, then to learn how to select from other theories as warranted by the client and his/her demographics and by the presenting and underlying issues;” and “In the master’s program, we do try to get them to stick to



one or two theories in their practices, and focus more on integrative processes in the doctoral course." Examples of comments for the subcode of "students" developmental status" included: "I believe the counselor's level of development strongly influences his/her ability to integrate theoretical concepts and apply them effectively;" "Integrative understanding...is a higher level of understanding and takes place on the more advanced learner/practitioner level as counselors move toward competence and then mastery. The early development of counselors is focused upon the development of basic helping skills and a basic understanding of theory and techniques;" and "I believe integrative counseling is a developmental process."

*Concerns about integration not being implemented in a systematic or theoretically-based manner*

Examples of comments for the major code "concerns about integration not being implemented in a systematic or theoretically-based manner" included: "I believe that counselor educators are misinforming students by telling them they should be eclectic. In my experience with students, this usually equates to a lack of theoretically-based intentionality;" "Too often „integrative counseling“, whether in theoretical or pragmatic applications and considerations, has replaced the now taboo eclecticism. Rarely do I see integration applied from a systematic or coherent foundation;" "What often occurs is that the term „integration“ is used a posteriori to justify unstructured, non-systematic, and „what seems to work“ processes;" and "[Integration] is an approach that I believe relieves the counselor from having to truly learn and implement theory."

*Admissions regarding their lack of knowledge in this area*

Examples of comments for the major code "admissions regarding their lack of knowledge in this area" included: "I am not

sure if I understand the difference between eclectic and integrative counseling;" "I really appreciated your distinction between integrative and eclectic approaches to counseling;" and "I've never heard the term „integrative counseling“ until receiving your survey. I've heard and discussed [only] eclectic methods and approaches. My curiosity is stirred."

## Discussion

The data from this study are consistent with previous studies that have surveyed the theoretical orientations/affiliations of psychologists and other mental health professionals (Jensen et al., 1990; Norcross and Prochaska, 1982; 1988) in that the vast majority of counselor educators report that the integration of counseling approaches is very or extremely important to them and that they emphasize integration when teaching graduate level theories and methods courses. However, the data also reveal discrepancies between participants' reported valuing of integration and their knowledge of different, well-established forms of integration. For example, despite the fact that 69.3% of participants reported being competent to teach theoretical integration, only six of them (5.3% of the 113 who answered the latter open-ended question) wrote the name of Paul Wachtel as a theoretical integrationist, and he is widely acknowledged by other integrationists as the primary exemplar of theoretical integration (Gold, 1993; Norcross, 2005; Norcross and Newman, 2003). Moreover, even though Lazarus' multimodal therapy is an approach described in many of the commonly used counseling theories texts, only 44 participants (38.9%) listed his name as an exemplar of technical eclecticism (only one mentioned Norcross and another mentioned Beutler); and this was by far the integrative path that participants were able to provide the name of common exemplars with the highest frequency. When asked to provide the name of the person(s) they most associate with the five integrative

approaches, in each case the most common response was “I don’t know,” “N/A,” “no one person,” or “no one” (44.2% for systematic or technical eclecticism; 46.0% for the common factors approach; 48.7% for theoretical integration, 77.9% for assimilative integration, and 74.3% for metatheoretical integration). In contrast, the percentage of participants who were able to provide the name of common exemplars of those integrative approaches were 40.7%, 22.1%, 5.3%, 8.0%, and 11.5% respectively. Another apparent discrepancy in our data involves the finding that only 56.3% of participants reported currently teaching integrative counseling, whereas 81.9% reported believing that integration is very or extremely important.

On the other hand, it could be argued that we were overly selective in who we consider exemplars of the five integrative paths. For example, Rogers was identified by five participants as an exemplar of the common factors approach; the reason we did not consider him such is that although he emphasized “core conditions,” adherents of the common factors approach are interested in those therapeutic factors common to *most or all* approaches, and there are elements of various therapies that Rogers would not have believed were necessary or important (i.e., exposure to feared situations, modeling, behavioral regulation). Although we had several exemplars in mind for each integrative approach (based upon overviews of the integration movement such as Goldfried, 1982 and Norcross, 2005) prior to analyzing the data from this study, we considered each name that participants wrote more than once that we had not included. We subsequently performed literature searches to confirm or disconfirm whether that person is frequently regarded as an exemplar of such in the professional literature. Several of the exemplars mentioned in this manuscript resulted from this process. Also of interest is the work of Gerald Corey (2009), who describes an assimilative integrative approach in his book *The Art of Integrative Counseling*. Despite

Corey’s personal integrative approach of being rooted in a theoretical foundation of existential therapy and assimilating “basic concepts and techniques from a number of the other action-oriented therapies” (2009, p. 90), he was not identified as such by any of the participants.

A final point worth highlighting is the distinction between eclecticism and other forms of integration. Counselor educators in this study reported negative evaluations of eclecticism ten times as frequently as they did negative evaluations of integration. Whereas eclecticism tends to be more “actuarial” and pragmatic than theoretical (Norcross, 2005), integration tends to be more theoretically systematic. As mentioned in the results section, a number of participants stressed what they considered the importance of the systematic (theoretical) nature of one’s conceptualization of practice; for example: “I believe that counselor educators are misinforming students by telling them they should be eclectic. In my experience with students, this usually equates to a lack of theoretically-based intentionality.” Although we certainly recognize the merit of systematic eclecticism, especially when interventions are chosen from sound research, we also recognize limitations to practicing without a coherent conceptual framework to guide one’s practice, in part because meta-analytic reviews have suggested that many therapies that have garnered the title “empirically supported” have many significant limitations (Westen and Morrison, 2001). For an in-depth exploration of the issue of being systematically guided in one’s integration, see Marquis, Tursi, & Hudson (under review).

## Limitations

The design of this study was an online questionnaire, distributed to the entire membership of ACES, for the purpose of exploring counselor educators’ views pertaining to integrative counseling. As an exploratory study, it represents a first

step in the process of linking counselor educators' views with their actual practice of educating counselors-in-training. Clearly, more work will be needed to ferret out how counselor educators' views impact students as well as counselor education programs at large.

Of the 1019 email addresses to which the survey was sent, 41% of the participants responded, of which 260 were counselor educators. To the extent that a significant number of ACES members who are counselor educators did not respond, we cannot be certain regarding how representative the data are of the entire population of counselor educators because there could be systematic differences pertinent to integrative counseling of those who responded to the survey and those who did not. Moreover, the survey was administered only once, and thus could not capture any changes that might occur in the field, especially were they to occur rather suddenly (Fink, 2009).

In addition to asking participants if they believed they were competent to teach each of the five integrative approaches, participants' knowledge of the different integrative approaches was assessed by asking them to list the name of the person they most associate with each integrative approach. It could be argued that some participants understood the concepts and practices of a given integrative approach yet could not recall the name of an exemplar of such an approach. Thus, the relatively low percentages of participants who listed common exemplars may be an exaggerated underestimation of participants' knowledge of the different integrative approaches. Finally, it is possible that some of the wording of the definitions of integrative counseling communicated value-laden assumptions and, thus, could have biased some of the participants' responses. For example, in the cover letter, "integrative counseling" and "counseling integration" were defined as "those counseling approaches that do not *limit* themselves to *strict* adherence to a „pure form" or single-school approach to counseling" (italics

added here). In the body of the survey, *integrative* counseling approaches were defined as "using interventions from different counseling approaches based upon *conceptual* principles and practice that *transcends merely combining* different counseling approaches" (italics added here). The problems with the terms "limit," "strict," and "transcends merely combining" is that they communicate to the participant that the designer of the survey believes that integrative approaches are preferable to single-school or eclectic approaches. On the other hand, it also seems self-evidently true that those who counsel with the same (single-school) approach *are* limiting themselves and their clients, and to do so seems to require adherence that is strict. The word "transcend" in the phrase "transcends merely combining" was meant in its meaning of "to include and go beyond," not in its (secondary) meaning of "to outstrip or outdo in some attribute, quality, or power" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary). It, again, seems irrefutable that integrative approaches include combining different counseling approaches yet go beyond merely combining them (i.e., theoretical integration involves *synthesizing* different elements of different counseling approaches into a higher order whole). Although it is possible that those three terms could have biased some of the participants' responses, we do not believe that it is likely for two reasons. First, the data we obtained from ACES members are remarkably consistent with the responses of other mental health professionals regarding their views of integration, eclecticism, and single-school approaches (Jensen et al., 1990; Norcross and Prochaska, 1982; 1988; Norcross et al., 1989). Second, none of the participants in the pilot study communicated that they perceived a bias in the wording of the survey questions.

### Implications for Counselor Education

We believe there are compelling implications from this study, most of which

appear to warrant some degree of attention in both counselor education programs and the journals and organizations of the ACA. In essence, counselor educators and their students could benefit from having more formal venues to help them remain abreast of the continued developments in the integration movement. Given that the majority of clinicians – including counselors – report practicing integratively, counselor educators must be knowledgeable of the different integrative approaches so that they will be able to teach and train their students in them.

The integration of various theoretical approaches is clearly a major trend in the counseling field (Corey, 2009; Gold, 1993; Norcross, 2005). Despite widespread agreement that clients are best served by some sort of integrative counseling (Corey, 2009; Andrews, Norcross, and Halgin, 1992) and our finding that a significant majority of counselor educators believe that integration is very important, we are unaware of any counseling programs with an explicit emphasis on training in integrative approaches, nor are there any counseling journals that focus on such. In contrast, numerous psychology programs across the U.S. and Canada explicitly educate and train students in eclectic and integrative therapy (Norcross, 1986b). In fact, Norcross and Kaplan (1995) conducted a survey of SEPI members and received responses informing them of more than 150 integrative programs, workshops and courses in the programs taught by SEPI members; these were in psychology programs (SEPI is composed primarily of psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers; in 2009, there were only three counselors in SEPI, one of which is the lead author of this article and another who is the lead author's student).

#### *Suggestions for the counseling profession*

In addition to curricular changes that would involve more explicit focus on the theory and practice of integrative approaches, other concrete steps toward

ensuring that counselors do not fall behind other mental health professionals with regard to the issue of integration would be to establish a journal devoted to the theory, practice and research of integrative counseling. An initial step that could spark such momentum would be for *The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision* or another counseling journal to devote a special issue to integrative counseling, perhaps with an emphasis on issues related to training students in counseling integration (i.e., issues related to topics such as whether to teach integration from the beginning coursework or only after students know a number of different approaches -- and how to implement them -- well). Pertinent to this topic, Messer has noted that

integration may take place only partly through the novices' conceptual learning that allows them to represent problems in terms of surface features only. For therapists to integrate on a deeper level, they must first understand and integrate *within* each individual therapy and, only then, across therapies... This is not to say that teaching psychotherapy integration directly is not useful, but only that we recognize that the most meaningful integration will take some time and probably come about only after some years of experience. (2003, p. 155)

Another focus of such a special issue could involve a discussion of barriers to integrative training and what can be done to overcome those barriers. Given that 81.9% of participants responded that integration is very or extremely important to them yet only 56.3% of them currently teach or train their students in integrative counseling, one must ask "What barriers are making the teaching of, and training in, integrative counseling difficult?" One potential barrier involves data received from our survey: many counselor educators think that counselors-in-training need a solid foundation in single-school approaches before they can effectively

integrate. This leads to the question of whether or not integration is a feasible goal for most master's students. In-depth exploration of such issues will surely serve our profession (Marquis et al., under review).

### Conclusion

Our data suggest that counselor educators may not be educating counselors-in-training to a degree commensurate with how important most counselor educators state integration is. While our data suggest this, we also need further research to discern in more detail the actual integrative teaching and supervisory practices in counseling programs, as well as research investigating the effectiveness of such integrative practices. Several authors have outlined the many difficulties in integrative education and training (Andrews et al., 1992; Norcross, 1986b; Schacht, 1991). However, as stated above, only 41% of those solicited for the survey responded; thus, the respondents may represent different views on integration, compared to counselor educators who did not participate in this study. Although only conjecture at this point, respondents may represent a more positive attitude toward integration because the cover letter informed potential participants of the content of the survey and hence, possibly attracted a greater percentage of those who are interested in integration. If the respondents in this study represent counselor educators who are more interested in integration than most, then counselor educators, in general, may not be as open to integration as our data suggest and the overall outlook for integration within the counseling field overall could be more bleak than our data indicate. If, on the other hand, the participants provided a relatively representative view of the population of counselor educators, then the issue at hand is primarily one of implementation.

Considering that most counselor educators and other mental health professionals in the United States identify

as integrative (Corey, 2009; Jensen et al., 1990; Norcross, 2005), interest in integration is clearly strong. Building on this interest, counselor educators play a critical role in helping counseling students develop coherence in their integrative stances. We view counselor educators' roles as essential in helping counselors-in-training cultivate not only an attitude of openness toward integration and an appreciation that integrative approaches are necessary to serve a diverse array of clients, but also as central in educating them with regard to the knowledge base of integrative approaches, including when, why and how to integrate.

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