Making Career Counseling Relevant: Enhancing Experiential Learning Using a "Flipped" Course Design

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Abstract

Because work is important to mental health, faculty who teach career development courses need strategies to engage master's counseling students who may have low motivation for the topic. Findings from this exploratory study suggest that enhanced focus on experiential learning strategies, achieved by using a flipped classroom, may improve students' attitudes toward career development counseling and generate confidence in performing career counseling tasks (N=58). The experiential class activities and assignments, and technology utilized for flipping the course are described. Student feedback regarding changes in their attitudes and values toward career development, and confidence in performing career counseling, is reported along with feedback regarding instructional methods and preferred class activities and assignments. Implications for counselor education are discussed.

Keywords

Author's Notes

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Work is central to the lives of Americans and is interrelated with mental health and overall well-being (Bluestein, 2008). Myers and Sweeney (2005) identified work as "an essential element in human experience that can enhance one's capacity to live life fully" (p. 274) in their evidence-based wellness model. Further, clients' career related concerns and decisions are inseparable from personal concerns, thus, it is vital that *all* counselors are prepared to respond to a full range of client needs (Swanson & Fouad, 2010). It is not surprising, therefore, that The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) has identified career development as one of eight common core curricular areas required of all students in an accredited counseling program (CACREP, 2009). Despite the importance of career development counseling, counselor trainees and practicing counselors approach the topic with low motivation and trainees often feel that it will not be relevant to their future work with clients (Hartung, 2005; Lara, Kline, & Paulson, 2011; Savickas, 2003).

This low interest in the topic of career development counseling may be shared among some faculty. The career development course is, at times, assigned to newer or non-tenure track faculty members, as more senior counselor educators often do not prefer to teach it (Carter, Bowman, Kher, Bowman, & Jones, 1994; Savickas, 2003). In fact, Carter et al. found that among senior faculty, the career development course was rated the least satisfying to teach. Further, career development courses are "high content courses" in which the instructor must teach numerous theories (due to CACREP requirements and preparation for standardized counselor licensing exams). The theories can be challenging to present meaningfully (Osborne, 2009) and can consume considerable class time (Carter et al., 1994). Engaging students in a theory-dense course can be challenging when students and/or faculty do not view career development counseling as professionally relevant. Conversely, in a more recent study of faculty who teach

career development, Osborne and Dames (2013) found that 85% of participants ($n = 77$) reported positive feelings toward teaching the course, although instructors recognized it can be a challenge. One participant commented, "I love the challenge of 'convincing' the students that career is salient in their work regardless of whether or not they want to be a career counselor" (p. 305). Many instructors in the study found enjoyment in seeing students' attitudes start to shift from negative to positive over the course of the semester.

As a result, instructors must find creative ways to motivate students to engage with the material such as utilizing experiential learning strategies (Young & Hundley, 2013). Paradoxically, little has been written in counseling journals in the last ten years evaluating empirical studies of active learning approaches to teaching the career development course (Barrio Minton, Wachter Morris, & Yaites, 2014; Lara et al., 2011). Only four scholarly articles published between 2001 and 2011 in American Counseling Association (ACA) journals were classified as centrally focused on strategies for teaching career development (Barrio Minton et al.). A number of educators have shared practical suggestions for teaching career development, via books, book chapters, and conference presentations (Emmett & McAuliffe, 2011; Minor & Pope, 2005; Oberman & Studer, 2009; Osborn, 2009; Rush, 2009; Toman, 2012), however, scholarship on evidence-based teaching strategies for making career development counseling relevant to students is limited.

Based on the challenges in creating an effective teaching-learning environment for the career development course and limited scholarship on ways to enhance interest in the topic, we describe how experiential learning strategies were used to impact students' values and attitudes toward career development counseling and their confidence in performing career development counseling tasks. In addition, we illustrate how flipped course content delivery (Stone, 2012) was

used to expand available class time for experiential learning, with the goal of making career development relevant to students.

Attitudes toward Career Counseling Courses

Scholars have examined counseling students' attitudes toward career development counseling courses (e.g., Heppner, O'Brien, Hinkelman, & Flores, 1996; Lara et al., 2011) particularly as interest in career development counseling has declined over the decades (Heppner et al.). Based on two extant empirical studies, researchers found that students' familiarity with career counseling (Lara et al., 2011), their perceptions of faculty enthusiasm for the topic, and their internalization of the attitudes of their peers adversely impacted their expectations for the career counseling course (Heppner et al., 1996; Lara et al., 2011). Further, students' attitudes toward career counseling were influenced by their level of engagement with the course, their personal value for career counseling (Lara et al., 2011), and their ability to master and apply career development concepts (Heppner et al., 1996; Lara et al., 2011). However, participants in the Lara et al. (2011) study relayed that at the conclusion of the course, they still felt less than fully competent to conduct career counseling and thus, in need of further training. In the words of one participant, "Understanding theory isn't the biggest thing, but applying it" (p. 437). Although limited, these studies point to the importance of shifting negative student attitudes by engaging students, and providing opportunities for direct practice of career development counseling skills, with instructor feedback, to build confidence.

Osborn and Dames (2013) documented attitudes toward teaching career development counseling in a quantitative descriptive study from the instructor point of view ($N = 91$). Most faculty were motivated by the opportunity to convince the students that counseling clients with career issues would be salient in their future work, but some did not enjoy the continual struggle

to change students' attitudes year after year. One participant in the study summarized the dilemma this way:

> Counselors-in-training have the least interest in career counseling and its theories, yet out in the active practice the information and skills are greatly needed; therefore, the challenge is to engage them in an area that they are not interested in and yet will have proportionally the greatest need (Osborne & Dames, 2013, p. 305).

In sum, empirical support for low interest in career development among students and faculty, coupled with the lack of recent publications regarding career development pedagogy (Barrio Minton et al., 2014) point to the need for career development instructors to have teaching strategies to diminish student resistance and increase motivation and sense of relevance. Based on studies of both counselor trainees and faculty, researchers made four key recommendations for career development counseling instructors: (1) increase the relevance of career as a topic for the students, (2) give greater attention to, and instruction for, the practical application of career counseling; (3) link career-based concepts to other aspects of the counseling curriculum (e.g., basic skills, multicultural competency, assessment); and (4) understand the importance of faculty attitudes toward career development counseling in generating enthusiasm and relevance among students enrolled in the course.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning strategies are based on a structured cycle of doing/experiencing and then reflecting to generate meaning and improve implementation (Gerstein, 2011). Researchers have documented the use of experiential learning strategies in counselor education primarily in multicultural classes (Arthur & Achenbach, 2002; Tromski & Doston, 2003), but also in courses working with groups (Pistole & Filer, 1991; Young & Hundley, 2013) or couples and families

(Lim, 2008; Shurts et al., 2006). Although the types of experiences being generated were different in each case, the importance of structured reflection after the active learning phase was a common theme among these studies. Counselor educators have utilized video case studies, self-awareness exercises, metaphors or guided imagery, psychodrama or role play, and interactive media/technology. Experiential activities have been associated with better student outcomes in terms of motivation, comprehension, application of theory, performance of skills, and critical thinking (as summarized in Osborn & Dames, 2013).

Further, in a survey of 84 associate and full counseling professors, Carter et al. (1994) found that courses that have a balance of didactic and experiential learning are greatly preferred (84%) over purely didactic (10%) or purely experiential (6%) courses. The authors recommended that when teaching courses that are theory dense and traditionally didactic, instructors revise the curriculum to create time for experiential learning. Thus, utilizing a pedagogical approach that prioritizes active learning and application is a logical strategy for a challenging course like career development. Given the theory/content demands of the career development course, however, finding the class time to implement experiential activities, including those that enhance skill building as recommended by Lara and colleagues (2011), can be a challenge. Flipped course designs (Stone, 2012) are growing in popularity as a means for moving content delivery outside of class time and increasing the opportunity for a more interactive and engaging class experience.

Flipped Course Model

A course is defined as "flipped" when lectures are moved outside of class and homework (i.e., practical application with feedback) is moved into the classroom (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2014). Technology is utilized to deliver brief pre-recorded lectures covering the

most essential points to students outside of class time (Gerstein, 2011; Milman, 2012). The delivery of lectures as video homework is only part of the flipped strategy; students must also respond to the lectures in some way such as posting their reactions to the content online and/or bringing questions about the content to class (Tucker, 2012). Thus, students have absorbed some of the basic content and have started to identify where they have more nuanced questions before class. Stone (2012) emphasized that by using a flipped class model, instructors are able to preserve content delivery while prioritizing application, inquiry, and active learning during class time. This model places greater emphasis on the relationships and interactions that can happen in a classroom community, and is often described as more engaging and active in terms of both student and instructor roles (Stone).

Although a flipped classroom can be difficult to adopt among instructors who are comfortable with a traditional lecture format (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2014), it seems a reasonable choice for counseling faculty versed in leading experiential activities (Moran & Milsom, 2015; Young & Hundley, 2013). Based on a review of the flipped course design literature, there is anecdotal evidence that this model can positively influence students' learning experiences and academic outcomes. However, empirical evidence is limited and largely focused on undergraduate courses. Studies that help elucidate the utility of a flipped classroom as a means for increasing experiential learning and enhancing student's attitude toward course content are needed. In particular, given the low interest in career counseling among counseling students, a study of experiential learning, using a flipped class model in the career counseling course is warranted.

Therefore, we implemented experiential learning strategies in the career development counseling course at two universities after creating a flipped course design. We utilized a

pre/post course assessment to understand whether students' attitudes and values for career development counseling were changed by the class experience. Additional post-course evaluation items were used to describe students' level of confidence in applying course material to counseling practice and to identify the particular course activities that were perceived as most helpful. The goal of the current preliminary research study was to evaluate the impact of a highly experiential model of career counseling instruction on students' values and attitudes toward, and confidence in, performing career counseling. We hypothesized that students would endorse a more positive value for and attitudes toward career development counseling after completing the experientially-focused curriculum, and would endorse having confidence to perform career counseling.

Methods

Participants

Master's counseling students from two CACREP-accredited programs in two states (southeastern and western) participated in the study. Participants were recruited from two career development counseling courses, one taught by each author. All 58 students from the two classes consented to participate for a 100% response rate. Participants at University A ($n = 25$) were a non-cohort, therefore, they were in various stages of completion of the program, however, all but one student was at least in their second semester. Participants at University B ($n = 33$) were in the second year of a cohort-based program, and thus were starting their internships in a variety of settings concurrent with taking the career course. Based on the total sample ($N = 58$), 84.5% were female ($n = 49$), and 15.5% were male ($n = 9$), with an average age of 28.2 ($SD = 6.8$). The majority of participants ($n = 21$, 36.2%) were in the couples and family track, followed by clinical mental health or community counseling ($n = 18$, 31.0%), and school counseling 19.0% (n

= 11, 19.0%). The remaining participants were in college counseling/student development or dual tracked (n = 8, 13.8%). The majority of participants identified as Caucasian (n = 41, 70.7%), while others described themselves as African-American (n = 9, 15.5%), Biracial (n = 4, 6.9%), Asian American (n = 3, 5.2%), and Other (n = 1, 1.7%).

The instructors were both Caucasian females who were early career faculty members but had experience in counseling and education prior to completing their PhDs. Instructor A worked ten years as a counselor in a variety of settings including two university counseling centers in which she provided career counseling. She taught a number of graduate courses including an undergraduate Career Planning course and two semesters of the graduate Career Development/Counseling Course. Instructor B had worked for nine years as an academic advisor/career counselor for undeclared students in a university setting and had taught the Career Development/Counseling course four times before the course under study.

Procedures

The first day of class, we (the authors/instructors) relayed that a research assistant would be describing a study to the students, which was voluntary and anonymous (students selected a research ID number). Participants were informed that the survey was assessing instructional strategies used in the course and the impact on their perceptions of the meaning or usefulness of career counseling as a topic of study. We left the room while the assistant read the verbal consent form to the students and administered and collected the survey. Thus, the pre-test occurred prior to any classroom instruction. The post-test was collected in a similar manner on the last day of class. Because both campus IRB's had approved the study as exempt, no identifying information was collected concurrent with the surveys to allow students to participate with complete anonymity, as some questions rated both the class experience and the instructor. Demographic

information was solicited after the class ended via anonymous electronic survey to preserve confidentiality of student feedback. According to ACA ethical codes, students who participate in research with their instructors should not experience any impact on their academic standing (code G.2.b), which is why we took several steps to separate our teaching role from the researcher role (ACA, 2014).

Classroom Structure

We, the authors/instructors, had previously co-taught the career course and collaborated on the design prior to the semester in which we implemented the experiential learning model. Thus, we formatted our classes similarly, using the same text, parallel assignments, similar in-class activities, and similar uses of the technology for flipping content. Differences between the two classes included different instructors, different university and departmental contexts, and different timing in the students' programs of study. These differences are delineated in greater detail in the below description of the courses. Following we will briefly describe how we utilized a flipped class design to support out-of-class content delivery increasing available class time for more engaging, interactive, and practical learning experience.

CACREP prescribed content, including numerous career theories, models, and resources, was largely delivered outside of class with the use of technology. Instructors utilized similar technology for flipping the course (e.g., for recording PPT narration), however, it varied slightly based upon cost, availability, and technical support at their respective campuses. Instructor A used audio narrated PowerPoint presentations via Camtasia (http://www.techsmith.com/camtasia.html) which students received online a week before each class. A rotating subset of students was responsible for posting written responses and questions related to the presentation online each week. These postings, which included student developed

discussion questions, were then discussed in small groups during class. Similarly, instructor B delivered lecture content to students a week in advance via video recorded presentations using VoiceThread (voicethread.com), and a subset of students was responsible for adding video or audio comments on the lecture slides each week. The student comments were similarly processed in class. Online response postings and short written or interactive quizzes were utilized (in both classes) to ensure students were reviewing the lectures and completing assigned reading. Both instructors solicited informal feedback from the students to ensure that access to, and use of, technology did not become a barrier for participation; there were no identified concerns about technology adoption from the student point of view. Further, we deemed adopting varied technology for the course as acceptable given that counseling programs continuously update their technology and these can be leveraged to accommodate different learning styles and encourage active engagement with course content (Osborn & Dames, 2013).

As a result of this content delivery method, a substantial portion of class time (approximately 75-80%, as opposed to less than 50% in our previous non-flipped offerings) was available for participating in activities and working with fellow students in career counseling role plays or experiential learning. Activities included viewing counselor-client video examples, discussing case studies, engaging in diversity awareness activities, implementing structured career interviews, exploring online career resources, and processing activities in large and small groups. An effort was made to bring in "real world" career related content that was meaningful to the students into the classroom. Instructor A employed *News You Can Use*, whereby a rotating subset of students brought current career news and events to class and initiated a class discussion of the information. Instructor B utilized a class Twitter account with designated volunteers who

were willing to identify and share current career news. The instructor would open the Twitter account during class to allow all students to view and discuss the posts.

Students were required to complete formal career assessments, such as the Life Values Inventory (LVI; Crace & Brown, 2008) and the Strong Interest Inventory (SII; Strong, Donnay, Morris, Schaubhut, & Thompson, 2004). In-class time was also used for completing and discussing a number of informal assessments such as a values card sort or checklist, career timeline, career genogram, a Myers Briggs Type Indicator proxy, and a Wheel of Life (Whitworth, Kimsey-House, & Sandahl, 1998), a visual depiction of their level of satisfaction in areas such as social, career, financial, spiritual, and physical well-being. There was a formal practicum in classroom B whereby students worked for four hours total with volunteer clients to interpret some of the informal career assessments they had learned in class. Although Classroom A did not have a formal practicum, equivalent time was spent peer counseling with instructor observation and feedback.

Finally, in addition to reading, audio/video lectures, quizzes, activities, and practical application, the course included outside assignments. These assignments were (a) researching and writing up a concise summary of a chosen theory, which was then compiled for all class members as a standardized exam study guide; (b) developing and presenting a career program for a specific population; and (c) completing a career portfolio. Students in both classes had "portfolio partners" with whom they shared the contents of their portfolio and completed a counseling assessment and plan. The portfolio included items such as: a written summary of an informational interview, a resume, a career autobiography, a stepwise career plan, a career timeline, a career genogram, career assessments and reflections, a journal entry on decision making style, a reflection on role models/career influences, and a summary of the Career

Construction Interview (Savickas & Hartung, 2012). Thus, several of the portfolio items had been generated and discussed in class, but were further reflected upon by each portfolio pair during peer counseling. A sample class assignment can be found in the Appendix, and interested readers may also explore classroom activities found in Minor and Pope (2005) and Toman (2012).

Measures

The purpose of this preliminary study was to assess student response to a teaching strategy, not to develop and validate a new measure. Thus, we drew from existing measures and qualitative research to create survey questions aligned with our research questions. Specifically, values and attitudes were assessed with ten items and students' confidence in performing career counseling and related tasks was assessed with four items. Students were to rate all survey items using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

Attitudes toward Career Counseling. We used five pre-test/post-test items to measure students' attitudes toward career counseling. Two items, drawn from Lara and colleagues (2011), addressed students' attitude toward career counseling (e.g., *"I am excited to learn about career counseling"*) and three items, adapted from the Attitudes toward Career Counseling Scale (ACCS; Rochlen, Mohr & Hargrove, 1999) addressed career attitudes as stigma toward career counseling (e.g., *"Talking to a counselor about career issues is less pressing or important than talking about personal issues").*

Value for Career Counseling. Five pre-test/post test items were used to measure value for career counseling; two items were adapted from the ACCS scale (e.g., *"Career counseling is a valuable resource for people making a career choice or career change"*) and three items were from the findings of Lara et al. (2011) to reflect students' value for career counseling (e.g., *"I*

believe that career/work, paid or unpaid, is an important aspect of all clients' lives and their wellness").

Career Counseling Confidence. An additional four items were created to assess students' sense of confidence in performing career counseling and related tasks (e.g., career assessments) drawing directly from themes identified in the grounded theory study conducted by Lara et al. (2011). These were post-test only items such as: "*I gained confidence in my ability to perform career counseling related tasks and activities*" and "*If my clients were having career related issues, I would not hesitate to address them.*"

Quality of Learning Experience. To obtain information on which instructional factors students perceived as most positive and influential to their learning experience, students were given a list of nine factors (e.g., class exercises, assignments, classmate interactions) and asked to rank them from 1 (most positive influence) to 9 (least positive influence). These nine factors were chosen because they are related to the content and skills that instructors deemed as most central to the course. Additionally, students were asked to identify the most influential class activities and assignments in an open-ended item.

Results

Based on preliminary *t*-test analyses of the two groups of participants, there was not a statistically significantly difference in their responses to the 10 pre-test items, so the groups were combined for all analyses. A single post-test item response was missing for one participant, therefore, the sample item mean rating for the respective class was used to replace the missing data. Further, four students from Class B incorrectly completed a question asking them to rank factors in the course, so they were omitted from that analysis.

We hypothesized that students would express greater value for and positive attitudes toward career counseling as a result of participating in the course. Means, standard deviations, and mean differences between pre/post-test ratings for 10 items of career values and attitudes were calculated (Table 1). The sample mean for 9 of the 10 items shifted in the expected direction from pre- to post-test. One item, *excitement to learn about career counseling*, decreased; however, the change was negligible (.07). Items with the greatest pre/post-test change were related to willingness to seek career counseling and improvement in overall attitude toward career counseling. Paired *t*-tests comparing items pre-post were conducted for all items in the questionnaire. A more conservative alpha level ($p < .005$) was established using a Bonferroni correction (Howell, 2007) to control for Type 1 error (.05/10 = .005) related to conducting multiple tests. Eight of the ten items yielded a significant difference in mean ratings from pre-test to post-test (Table 1).

Mean item ratings for the four post-test items evaluating students' career counseling confidence were calculated and all items were rated higher than average, using three as the average. Based on frequency ratings, all students responded favorably, rating the four confidence items (e.g., confidence with career counseling tasks) as 4 or 5 out of 5. Means and standard deviations for each item were as follows: *I feel more comfortable with using career assessments learned in class* (*M*=4.2, *SD*=.59), *I gained confidence in my ability to perform career counseling related tasks and activities* (*M*=4.2, *SD*=.59), *If my clients were having career related issues, I would not hesitate to address them* (*M*=4.5, *SD*=.65), and *Direct practice/application of class material via practicum (if applicable) or role plays increased my confidence in offering career related counseling* (*M*=4.0, *SD*=.66).

Table 1

Pre-test/Post-test Means, SD, and Mean Difference in Career Values and Attitudes

Item	Pre-test		Post-test		*Mean Difference**	*t*
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
VALUES						
If I had a career related dilemma, I would seek career counseling	3.12	1.17	3.98	.85	.86	6.15**
The counseling relationship is as essential to career counseling as it is to personal counseling	3.96	.90	4.57	.62	.61	5.34**
I can see how career and personal counseling are interrelated	4.10	.74	4.67	.47	.57	6.39**
Career counseling is a valuable resource for people making a career choice or career change	4.12	.65	4.57	.57	.45	4.68**
I believe that career/work, paid or unpaid, is an important aspect of all clients' lives and their wellness	4.48	.57	4.55	.60	.07	.73
ATTITUDES						
I have a positive attitude toward career counseling	3.69	.75	4.38	.75	.69	6.09**
I can see how a career counseling course is relevant to my program track	4.12	.84	4.66	.51	.54	5.09**
Talking to a counselor about career issues is less pressing or important than talking about personal issues	2.69	1.08	2.16	.85	-.53	4.33**
Having to see a counselor to talk about career related concerns is a sign of indecisiveness	2.00	1.00	1.64	.77	-.36	2.90**
I am excited to learn about career counseling	3.76	.90	3.69	.92	-.07	.53

Note: *Items ordered by descending mean difference for each variable.
**$p < .004$

Additionally, to better understand what aspects of the course most influenced students' experience in the class, students were asked to rank nine factors in terms of how much they contributed to the quality of their learning experience (Table 2). We hypothesized that students

would place greater value on experiential and interactive components of the course. Among the nine factors, students ranked class exercises as most contributing to the quality of their class experience followed by personal reflection, skills practice, and classmate interaction.

Table 2

Ranking of Course Factors Influencing Quality of Class Experience

Ranking	Item	Mean Ranking*
1	Class experiences/exercises	7.07
2	Personal career reflection/development opportunities	6.20
3	Skills practice (e.g., peer counseling and practicum)	5.81
4	Classmate interactions	5.37
5	Assessments	5.15
6	Personality/teaching style of instructor	4.78
7	Technological resources (e.g., Camtasia Relay, Blackboard, VoiceThread, Twitter)	4.00
8	Content (e.g., textbook, articles, PowerPoint presentations)	3.93
9	Assignments (e.g., career portfolio, quizzes, papers)	2.69

Notes: *Higher means associated with higher ranking

Finally, participants were asked to write in their preferred course assignment and their top three preferred class exercises in an open-ended item. We did not make a hypothesis about specific preferred exercises as this was exploratory. A subset of the sample did not rank course assignments or exercises highly, and subsequently did not take the time to write in examples. Among students who did identify their favorite course assignment ($n = 36$), 61.1% identified the career portfolio and 13.9% identified the program development/evaluation project as the most meaningful assignments. Among students who identified some of their favorite class exercises ($n = 55$), informal values assessments such as values card sorts were most frequently cited ($n = 24$), followed by the W*heel of Life* exercise ($n = 18$), class discussion ($n = 14$), and career role plays ($n = 14$). In terms of differentiated exercises across courses, Course A students noted *News You*

Can Use (*n* = 9 of 25) among the most impactful experiences while Course B students noted their formal practicum experience among the most impactful (*n* = 7 of 33).

Discussion

The aim of the current study was to assess changes in master's students' value and attitudes for, and their overall confidence in, career development counseling after completing a 15-week career counseling course in which a flipped course model was used to shift content delivery outside of class and create more in-class time for experiential learning strategies. Additionally, we sought to determine what course components were perceived by students to be most influential to their learning and which class activities and assignments were most preferred.

First, we hypothesized that students would endorse greater value for, and a more positive attitude toward, career development counseling after completing the experientially-focused curriculum. As expected, there was a change in mean ratings in the expected direction for items related to participants' value for, and positive attitude toward career counseling, with one exception. Students' level of excitement for learning about career did not notably change over time and was higher than expected prior to the class, limiting the potential for the course to impact their attitude toward career counseling. Although we found preliminary support for our hypothesis, controlled studies comparing a class using experiential learning strategies within a flipped course structure with a traditionally structured course without a focus on experiential learning strategies would be needed to draw conclusions regarding the impact of experiential learning on students' attitudes and values.

There are few empirical studies of career development counseling instruction and limited research on experiential learning via flipped content delivery by which to compare results of the current study. Our findings, however, are congruent with Osborn and Dames' (2013) qualitative

study of career counseling instructors. The faculty in their survey identified the need to raise the relevance of career development counseling for their students by promoting active learning environments and connecting career development to other aspects of the counseling curriculum. Although we cannot infer a causal relationship between student's improved values and attitudes toward career development counseling and our focus on greater experiential learning strategies within the flipped course design, we have extended their study by providing preliminary evidence that a more experiential and interactive approach to the career development course, facilitated by using a flipped content delivery, may positively impact students' career values and attitudes for the topic.

Second, we hypothesized that students would endorse higher than average scores on items related to their confidence to engage in career counseling at the end of the course (e.g., "*I gained confidence in my ability to perform career counseling related tasks and activities*"). As expected, students reported mean values for post-test items related to confidence with career counseling tasks that were higher than average (i.e., 3 on the scale). We developed the course with attention to Lara and colleagues' (2011) recommendation to give greater attention to practical application of career counseling and Osborne and Dames' (2013) findings that instructors should increase the relevance of career for students first and incorporate experiential learning strategies. Although we cannot draw conclusions regarding the cause of students' high endorsement of career counseling confidence, it appears that students did complete the course with confidence in performing career counseling. Similarly, in the post-test, students endorsed that they were more likely to perceive career and personal counseling as interrelated. This aligns with the conclusion made by Lara et al. (2011) that career attitudes will shift over the career

course if students determine that career counseling has relevance in their personal and professional lives.

Third, as this study was exploratory, we did not hypothesize which course activities would be most influential to learning. However, because flipped content delivery is purported to increase time for application, active learning, and class interactions (Stone, 2012), we did hypothesize that the experiential and interactive components would be rated as most influential to student learning. Students reported that class experiences/exercises, personal career reflection, skills practice, and classmate interactions were most important to their learning experience. Finding that the experiential and interactive aspects of the course were perceived by students as most important to learning may offer direction to instructors regarding how to structure the career class time. This finding is consistent with the informal feedback offered by students in response to the flipped classroom model described by Moran and Milsom (2015); students rated experiential activities in class, working collaboratively with classmates, and working on class assignments while receiving instructor feedback as contributing "very much" to the facilitation of their learning the material. Additionally, in the current study personal career reflection was ranked second most influential to their learning, lending support to the idea that instructors should make the relevance of career for students a primary goal (Osborne & Dames, 2013).

Although assignments were ranked lowest on the factors that contributed to the overall course experience, the career portfolio assignment was identified by more than half of the students as the most preferred assignment. The portfolio combined personal career development, classmate interaction, and practical application of a number of career development related tasks and activities (e.g., resume, informational interview, career genogram), which were factors students identified as important in the current study. Portions of the career portfolio assignment

were completed as activities within class, so preference for the portfolio assignment may also suggest preference for the experiential and interactive components of class. In addition, the portfolio allowed students to practice holistic career assessment with a peer as a client, so it may also have fulfilled their desire for skills practice. This finding is congruent with findings in a previous study in which researchers (Lara et al., 2011) found that students' attitudes toward career counseling were influenced by their personal value for career counseling and how well the course prepared them to perform career counseling tasks.

Even though the technology used for the flipped lectures was not among the highest ranked factors influencing class experience, we maintain that the purpose of the technology was to support greater use of class time for personalizing and exploring theories and topics in a more experiential way. In this regard, it was important that the most valued part of the learning experience was not the novelty of the technology, but rather increased time for activities and interactions which the technology afforded us. Our intention was to prioritize active classroom interactions and help generate deeper meaning in the learning community by functioning more as the "guide on the side, not the sage on the stage" (King, 1993). We interpret student feedback that they valued opportunities for skills practice, personal reflection, and classmate interaction, to mean that those experiences contributed to the overall quality of the learning experience and influenced their values and attitudes toward career development counseling. It is noteworthy, that based on informal feedback, students relayed that they did not find the technology difficult or burdensome.

Further, students in the current study reported that class exercises, skills practice, and peer interaction were among the most important factors in their overall class experience. Based on the instructor perspective, these were the interactive components that were intentionally made

the focus of class time after flipping the lecture, and had been difficult to incorporate previously due to the time pressure to cover theories and content. The in-class activities that were identified by the students as the most beneficial were informal values assessments, the Wheel of Life exercise, role plays, and class discussions.

Although we did not evaluate the impact of the technology directly, using flipped content delivery was essential to our ability to increase experiential learning strategies in the career course. Using technological tools may increase time for interactions between faculty and students, create better student motivation/ engagement with the material in class, and generate more positive attitudes about learning (Stone, 2012).

The course had the greatest impact on students' likelihood to seek career counseling for their own career related dilemma, however, other pre/post items with the greatest change in mean rating were those that reflected an overall improved attitude toward career development counseling, connection between career counseling and personal counseling, and association of career with other parts of the students' curriculum (e.g., importance of the therapeutic alliance). These results lend support for the recommendations offered by Lara et al. (2011) and Osborne and Dames (2013) that it is important for instructors to connect career concepts to other aspects of the counseling curriculum and convey an enthusiastic and positive attitude toward career counseling.

Findings from the current study need to be considered within the limitations of the study design and sample. First, there were no previously developed and validated measures of career counseling trainee attitudes and values appropriate for the goals of our study. We took a first step toward learning about students' attitudes and experiences. However, future researchers could improve upon this study by creating and testing a measure of students' values and attitudes

toward career development courses and career counseling activities. Second, all instruments were self-report and susceptible to social desirability. Third, participants were mostly Caucasian females, recruited from only two career courses within CACREP-accredited programs. It is unknown how results might generalize to other students or programs. Fourth, because we utilized a pre-test, post-test design with no control group, it is unclear whether results were based on using experiential learning strategies or other factors. Lastly, because the course was delivered over 15 weeks, it is unclear whether confounding variables (e.g., personal career experiences) may have also impacted students' attitudes and values toward career counseling courses.

Implications and Future Directions

Despite the limitations of the current study, the findings include several important implications for teaching career development counseling. First, it may be important to assess students' opinions of career counseling early in the semester and throughout the course so the instructor can acknowledge, explore, and address these views as part of class discussions. Addressing any extant negative feelings directly may help the instructor to adjust experiential learning activities to align with student needs (e.g., diminishing concerns about lack of relevance of career counseling in clinical settings by incorporating role plays directly addressing mental health issues due to unemployment or impact on members of the family system). Second, the use of experiential learning strategies may be important to improving students' attitude and value for the career course, however, controlled studies are needed to support this. Further, activities that encouraged personal reflection related to career (e.g., work-life balance, career decision making, role of personal values, interests, or skills in career satisfaction) were appreciated among students in the current sample which may be useful feedback for instructors who aim to create the career counseling course in a way that will most interest students. In addition, engaging

students in learning "real world" career information (e.g., *News You Can Use* activity) may be a useful tool to stimulate interest in career development, particularly if discussed with the intent to examine their implications for the mental health and wellness of clients (e.g., emotional impact of workplace discrimination), to help students relate career and personal issues in counseling.

Third, it is important that flipped content delivery is part of an overall instructional strategy that focuses on experiential learning (Tucker, 2012). For the courses in the current study, technology was a useful tool for delivering content outside of the classroom to free up in-class time for experiential activities. The flipped classroom blog-o-sphere laments that many faculty members are trained to transmit information via lecture, and thus feel at a loss when given an opportunity to direct "extra class time" to a different purpose (Gerstein, 2011). Although many counselor educators are inherent facilitators, successfully using this in-class time requires planning, attention, and constant monitoring for needed modifications. In counselor education at the master's level, there are many ways to create intentional, practical, and active learning experiences (Young & Hundley, 2013), only some of which have been described in the current study. Instructors could consider a service learning component, for example, which allows for student skills practice, potential benefit to the community, and deeper understanding of the connections between personal and career related issues for clients.

Finally, skills practice was ranked high as a positive influence on students' class experience, thus, a practicum (or peer career counseling) may be a vital component to the course. Depending on how the career counseling course is scheduled relative to the basic helping skills portion of the curriculum, instructors may need to provide students with varying degrees of structure and guidance regarding counseling skills. Practice that allows students to consider career related issues of clients in their intended settings (e.g., cases drawn from schools,

universities, clinics, private practices) may also help to increase sense of relevance of career issues to future work. Practical experience gives students the opportunity to view clients' career concerns more holistically, assessing their mental health, support systems, and career concerns simultaneously (Minor & Pope, 2005). Further, applying career theories or experiential activities to their peers or themselves allows students to build empathy for the emotional component of career issues and to see relevance in their own lives. Practical and experiential application of the material supports students to feel confident in and gain value for career counseling (Arthur & Achenbach, 2002; Young & Hundley, 2013).

Findings from the current study offered preliminary evidence that increasing time for experiential learning strategies by flipping content delivery, may contribute to enhancing students value for, and attitude toward, the career development counseling course. Further, developing a measure to assess values and attitudes toward career counseling among counselor trainees would support further research in this area. Future researchers could also explore whether a formal practicum increases students career counseling self-efficacy and satisfaction with the career development counseling course. Because counselors must be able to address career concerns among clients, and they often approach the career development course with low interest, researching teaching strategies that improve students' attitudes toward the topic of career development is important to their overall development as counselors as well as to providing quality services to clients.

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Appendix

90 Second Commercial – "Tell Me about Yourself"

This activity is designed to help students learn an essential interviewing skill, how to respond to the interviewer request "tell me about yourself". Discussion is facilitated by asking students if they have ever been given this prompt and how they have responded. Short video clips about the question (found on youtube.com) are also shown (e.g., explaining the purpose of the interview prompt and the focus of an appropriate answer, or humorous examples of interviewees responding poorly to this question) to introduce the topic and promote discussion.

Students are then given a description of a counseling job posting and a corresponding answer to the question "tell me about yourself". After addressing questions, students are instructed to work on a draft of their "commercial" for use in a class activity the following week. The next week students work in pairs reading their commercial out loud and receiving feedback from their peer. Following this activity, the instructor fields a few examples for the whole class and provides feedback so that students gain a better understanding of a quality response. The commercial is later submitted, along with a specific job posting, as part of a career portfolio assignment so that each student receives instructor feedback on their commercial.