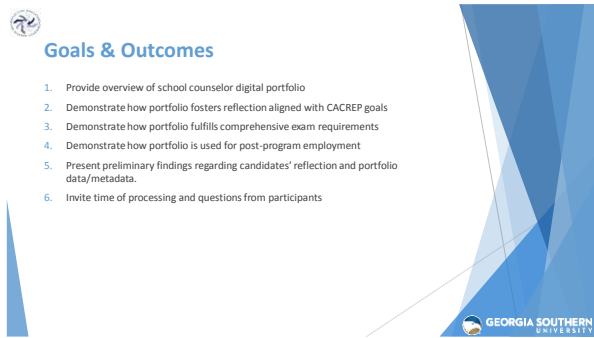# From Reflection to Employment

Using Digital Portfolios in School Counselor Education

Innovations in School Counselor Preparation Conference, 2016
Richard E. Cleveland & Catherine Hammond
Georgia Southern University

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Goals & Outcomes

1. Provide overview of school counselor digital portfolio
2. Demonstrate how portfolio fosters reflection aligned with CACREP goals
3. Demonstrate how portfolio fulfills comprehensive exam requirements
4. Demonstrate how portfolio is used for post-program employment
5. Present preliminary findings regarding candidates' reflection and portfolio data/metadata.
6. Invite time of processing and questions from participants

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Outline of Time Together

- History
- Literature Review
- Viewing Sample Digital Portfolios
- Candidate Perceptions
- Preliminary Research Findings
- Limitations & Next Steps
- Questions

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History: *What led to trying this out?*

- **Program Re-Boot**
  - Year 1: COUN7334 Group Dynamics course prep: Inconsistency + Laziness = Digital Format
  - Year 2: Discussions of replacing Comp with Portfolio requirement
- **Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL) Research Fellowship**
  - Monies funding programmatic, pedagogy, assessment, etc. focused research
  - Replacing static (email) digital reflections with more dynamic (blog) format
- **Doc Student Adjunct Experience**
  - EDU2200 "mop up" course setting up tech to satisfy edTPA reflection requirements
  - Reflection Breadth, Depth, & Evolution
  - Replacing physical binders with tech (e.g., links, URL, QR codes, etc.)

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Definitional Matters

What do you mean "*Reflection*"?

- Self-Awareness vs. Self-Reflection
- Deep Processing / Semantic Processing
- Metacognition
- Reflective Practice
- Reflective Thinking
- Pre-, Quasi-, and Reflective Thinking Process
- Reflectivity
- Reflection-*on*-Action vs. Reflection-*in*-Action
- Diffraction
- Mindfulness

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Literature Review

- **Education**
  - Dewey (1933;1938); Denton (2011; 2012); Kohlberg (1981); Kolb (1984); Mayes (2011); Schon (1983; 1987)
- **Stepping Stone**
  - Creativity (Bell, Limberg, Jacobson, & Super, 2014)
  - Experiential Learning (EL) (Association for Experiential Education, 2013)
  - Intentionality (Gersten, Mears, Baldwin, Roberts, Gaertner, & Bartley, 2013)
- **Professional Maturation & Anti-Burnout**
  - Guiffrida (2005); Orchowski, Evangelista, & Probst (2010)

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Literature Review

- **Counselor Preparation**
  - Bell, Limberg, Jacobson, & Super (2014); Corey, Corey, & Callanan (1993); Erford (2015); Fong, Borders, Ethington, & Pitts (1997); Griffith, & Frieden (2000); Guiffrida (2005); McAuliffe & Eriksen (2011); Nelson & Neufeldt (1998); Rogers (1957); Thompson (2012); Young (2009)
- **Accreditation & Best Practices**
  - ACA (2014); ACES (2011); CACREP (2009;2015); CAEP/NCATE (2015)

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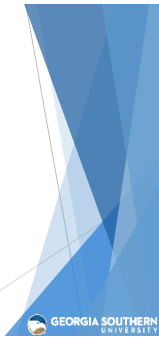
Literature Review

- **Use of Journaling**
  - Bohecker, Wathen, Wells, Salazar, & Vereen (2014); Griffith & Frieden (2000); House & Sears (2002)
- **Guided Reflection**
  - Bell, Limberg, Jacobson, & Super (2014); Orchowski, Evangelista, & Probst (2010)
- **Course Texts**
  - Corey, Corey, & Corey (2014); Sink, Edwards, & Eppler (2012)

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Literature Review: *Inspirational Quotes*

- "The rigorous process of graduate school may lead to greater self-discipline and 'follow the rules' thinking versus creative thinking." (Bell, Limberg, Jacobson, & Super, 2014)

- "The reasons counselors do what they do are distinct from how they do it. [...] It is possible that counselors, particularly those in the early stages of training, will at times be lacking intentionality,..." (Gersten, Mears, Baldwin, Roberts, Gaertner, & Bartley, 2013)

- "Although professionals in the field of education have acknowledged and studied the importance of reflection, counselor education has not taken advantage of this powerful teaching tool. Research that focuses on counselor education is needed (by educators) to know the most effective ways to educate reflective practitioners." (Griffith & Frieden, 2000)

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Tenets of a Working Definition

- Intentional
- Habit
- Not confined to the past tense
- Active & ongoing
- Relational ontology of separateness (Keevers & Treleaven, 2011)
- Technology infused

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Viewing Sample Digital Portfolios

- COUN7334 Group Dynamics Portfolio
- Gus' Digital Portfolio Template

- Reflection Guiding Rubric (Denton, 2012)
A. **Main Point**: *Post clearly states main point/opinion of reflection*
B. **Evidence**: *Post gives example or evidence of main point*
C. **Connection**: *Post states connection between main point and evidence*
D. **Reflection**: *Post answers "So what?", describing how main point relates to group counseling and candidate as counselor*
E. **Elements**: *Length of 250-400 words, and use of group counseling language/terms*

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Graduate Student Perceptions

- Demonstrating a "finished" or near-finished candidate portfolio
- Candidate perceptions regarding:
    1. The process of creating the digital portfolio
    2. Using the digital portfolio for reflection
    3. Thoughts/experiences using the digital portfolio for interviews

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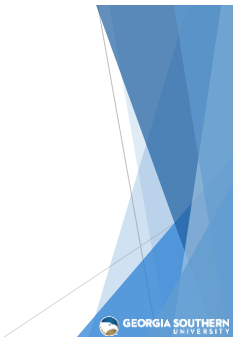
Preliminary Research Findings

- 2 Sections taught Fall semester, 2015-16
- Challenges retrieving data from adjunct teaching section B course (control)

- Approximately half of candidates rated successfully by one rater thus far (n = 16)
- After snooping the data (normality), paired samples t test per replication

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Preliminary Research Findings

Component	Group	*M* Change	Sig. (2-tailed)
A. Main Point	Experimental	.000	1.000
	Control	**.625**	**.011**
B. Evidence	Experimental	.125	.351
	Control	**.500**	**.033**
C. Connection	Experimental	- .125	.732
	Control	.000	1.000
D. Reflection	Experimental	.125	.785
	Control	- .143	.689
E. Elements	Experimental	- .375	.080
	Control	- .143	.356

Note. "*M* Change" presents change in mean score from first to last posting. Values in bold Sig at p < .05

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Limitations

Where to begin...

- Small sample size
- Tension between guided/direction (i.e., rubric) and completely open
- Fidelity of control vs. experimental conditions
- Second course section instructor as adjunct faculty member
- Methodology?

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Next Steps: *Program/Pedagogy*

- Expanding digital portfolio from just one course (COUN7334 Group Dynamics) to use for reflections throughout course of study
- Expanding digital portfolio from just one MEd concentration (School Counseling) to all concentrations (i.e., CHMC, SAHE)
- Anchoring portfolio creation/implementation with a required foundational course that transcends concentration, and takes place first semester year 1
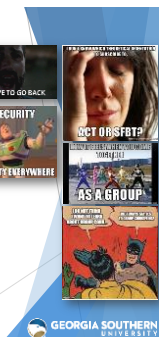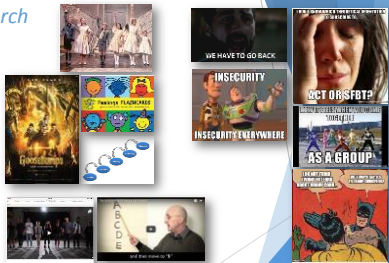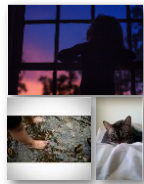
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Next Steps: *Research*

- Continue data-entry
- Multiple raters
- Complete analyses
- Consideration of more appropriate/relevant methodologies for analyses beyond requirements for replication of the study (i.e., answering the question of unit of analyses for reflection posts vs. candidates) $n = 113$ or $n = 16$

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Next Steps: *Research*

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