Utilizing Counseling Skills in the Classroom to Promote Student Well-Being and Success

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Abstract

The success of institutions of higher education is dependent upon student academic success. Current research with students in higher education links academic success with student well-being. Members of the faculty are in critical positions to ensure student success and thus, the institution, but may be unsure how to promote well-being in the classroom setting. This article examines challenges professors face and shares a professional performance review process. Strategies and skills used by professional counselors that university faculty can implement to foster a sense of student well-being and establish supportive relationships through an integration of Miller's Relational Cultural Theory and Social Cognitive Theory from Bandura are provided. Some of these counseling skills include rapport building, validation, empathy, grounding techniques, and mindfulness.

Keywords

Author's Notes

The definition of the "traditional" college student has changed in recent years. As institutions have increased their efforts to recruit "non-traditional" students, the resulting diversity in student backgrounds and experiences has brought about the necessity to rethink how we facilitate a learning environment focused on the well-being and academic success of the student body. For a number of students, the college experience differs from the expectations of their home community and can result in a conflict of cultures. Faculty members have the opportunity to provide a bridge from the culture of these students' home areas to that of the university community. Thus, the ability of faculty to develop positive relationships with their students can be a critical variable in their academic success.

From a theoretical perspective, an integration of Miller's Relational Cultural Theory (1976) and Bandura's Framework of Social Cognitive Theory (1986) provides a foundation for pedagogical approaches used by faculty to facilitate their students' overall well-being and academic success. Historically, females have been subordinate to males and individuals from underrepresented groups and individuals in the lower social class have been subordinate to those in positions of power. However, as student bodies become more diverse, faculty need to not only develop an understanding of the cultural perspectives represented in their classroom, but they need to develop positive relations with their students. In a study reported by Bradley and Holcomb-McCoy (2004), African American faculty members in Counselor Education reported a lack of mentoring relations and Cornelius, et al. (1997) reported a lack of informal networking opportunities for individuals of color and women. With women and faculty members of color being underrepresented in numerous disciplines in higher education, students from diverse backgrounds can be at a disadvantage when trying to establish mentoring/advising relationships with faculty members and may experience a feeling of isolation. Banks (2011) posits one's development is

influenced by their environment whereby positive connections and relations have a positive impact on one's development, and a negative environment can have a negative influence. Therefore, relational developments between faculty and students are extremely important.

Individuals have the capacity to change and society can influence change both negatively and positively. Therefore, relational developments between faculty and students are extremely important. It has become commonly accepted that Black students in higher education have unique cultural experiences they bring to the collegiate environment and some may cross undergraduate and graduate programs. Chun-Mei et al. (2007) reported one doctoral student stating:

> It is impossible to overestimate the significance of the student-advisor relationship. One cannot be to careful about choosing an advisor. This is both a personal and professional relationship that rivals marriage and parenthood in its complexity, variety and ramifications for the rest of one's life. (p. 263)

In a study by Barker (2011) investigating cross-race advising relationships among Black doctoral students and White advisors at a southern American university, findings indicated race can be a critical component. Participants in the study were from the social sciences and humanities and both doctoral students and faculty members felt it was important for students to have same-race advisors with gender being an important variable. However, students felt race was a liability where faculty felt race could be both a leverage and a liability. "Students felt feelings of isolation and being undervalued and did not identify 'benefits' of being Black" (p. 391). To promote positive cross-race interactions, Becker posited it was extremely important for students and faculty to have a "shared understanding of the racial and cultural history of their context" (p. 392). One implication of the findings was the need for institutions to provide professional development opportunities for

faculty members serving in the role of advisors and the process should begin during the doctoral process.

In a more recent study by Louis et al. (2018), findings indicated a need for professional development for faculty engaged in cross-racial mentoring. Mentoring relationships can be challenging while at the same time life-altering. One participant in the study stated that conversations can be strained as we "do not have a mutual language to speak to each other and convey what we wanted" (p. 212). Another participant stated she "struggled to give advice to students of a different ethnicity than me" (p. 212). Reference points can be different, and participants' internal struggles impacted the communication.

The value of integrating relational cultural theory (RTC) into the counseling process was posited by Crumb and Haskins (2020). Social context can influence the client issues and RTC acknowledges the value of the counselor-client relationship. According to Crumb and Haskins, RTC acknowledges a power relationship, increases relational validation, incorporates mutual empathy, and considers contextual factors all of which are valuable components of the counseling process.

In a study reported by Brown et al. in 2020, the authors posited the importance of using relational cultural theory to facilitate an understanding of first-generation students. There is often a cultural gap between first-generation students and the culture they encounter on university campuses. Participants in the study were first-generation students who went on to become college counselors or college professors. Findings from the analysis of the interview data indicated there were internal and external motivations associated with student success and all the participants "spoke at the centrality of relationship to their academic success" (Brown et al., 2020, p. 251). They also spoke about the impact of parental expectations and strong work ethic with all the Black

participants describing church as a resource with some indicating their church enhanced their self-efficacy. Findings also indicated that the community may be their greatest resource which may run counter of the individualistic culture on institutional campuses. Furthermore, first-generation students as a marginalized group may receive less attention than other marginalized groups on campus. When addressing cultural issues in a setting involving individuals from different cultural backgrounds, Woo et al. (2015) posited "the onus of addressing cultural issues should not be on the students" (p.299).

Individuals' beliefs regarding their abilities and their motivation relative to success are important variables relative to their academic progression in higher education. According to Wittner et al. (2022), beliefs in one's self-efficacy can be facilitated and "are fed by performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences (e.g., having role models that achieved the same goals), verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal" (p. 969). Bandura (1986) contended performance-based information had a greater impact on self-efficacy than learning that occurred vicariously. However, in a study of self-efficacy and academic motivation, Schunk (1991) contended high self-efficacy will not facilitate high performance when there is an absence of skills necessary for the achievement of the goals. Having confidence in one's performance can lead to perceived fit between one's abilities and the task. Using Lent et al. (1994) Cognitive Career Theory, which is built on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, Wittner et al. (2022) found high quality support reduced the intention of first-generation students to drop out of college. In an earlier study investigating social cognitive predictors of academic and life satisfaction among first and non-first-generation college students, Garriott et al. (2015) found self-efficacy predicted academic progress. This supported Bandura's (1986) contention that self-efficacy predicted academic achievement, career choices, and one's ability to deal with situations that created the emotion of

fear. Failure has a tendency to lower efficacy; however, when one's efficacy is developed; failure in a situation is not likely to have much of an impact. An individual's effort and their perception of the difficulty of a task tend to impact their performance based on their self-efficacy; and Lent (2004) posited one's progress toward performance standards was related to self-efficacy, and "social support served as a valuable resource for self-efficacy" (p. 496).

Perceptions develop within a social context and are influenced by how one perceives others feel about what they are able to do, especially in situations where there is a close relationship or where relations such as mentoring are important for success. This concept of social context provides a bridge between Miller's (1976) and Bandura's (1986) theories when focusing on student success and well-being, and supports the importance of what faculty do to facilitate student well-being and success. Miller (1976) posits that inequities make it difficult for the subordinate individual to believe in their own abilities thus increasing the inequities in a relationship.

The level of confidence faculty have in their teaching and ability to motivate their students is often related to training and development associated with job responsibilities. At the college level, Mills et al. (2007) found the level of self-efficacy impacted achievement in an intermediate French class, and Purzer (2011) found self-efficacy, using gain scores, to be correlated with achievement in an Introduction to Engineering Design Course, thus supporting the premise that self-efficacy and learning grow together. In a study reported by Younas et al. (2018), the authors posited "training and development have a positive impact on employee performance" (p. 22). There are many strategies and skills used by professional counselors that can be implemented in classrooms to foster a sense of student well-being and help establish relationships between students and members of the faculty (Geertshuis, 2018). Some of these counseling skills include rapport building, validation, empathy, psychoeducation on grounding techniques, and mindfulness.

The Link Between Student Well-Being and Academic Success

People who have a sense of mental and emotional well-being are likely to experience a greater sense of wellness in other areas of their lives, such as relationships and work. The same can be assumed of students: those who are well should experience greater success in the classroom. When Geertshuis (2018) assessed enthusiasm, contentment, anxiety, and depression in college students at the beginning, middle, and end of a semester, he found that "emotional well-being, even when captured in the earliest days of a programme, is predictive of learning behaviours, feeling like leaving, feelings of belonging, course satisfaction and academic achievement" (p. 163). Additionally, he found a significant association between depression at the start of the semester and academic performance at the end. Students who participate in counseling have shown decreases in symptoms related to anxiety, depression, thought problems, attention, and hyperactivity (Biasi et al., 2017) and increases in academic motivation, focus, and performance (Winterrowd et al., 2016). Winterrowd et al. (2016) also noted that students who received counseling at a university counseling center expressed improvement in both overall well-being and academic functioning, despite academic issues not being an initial concern for some students. These findings demonstrate a clear connection between student well-being and academic success.

Creating an Environment that Promotes Student Success

Students who are actively engaged in the learning process are more likely to achieve success, and faculty are viewed as a critical variable for promoting success and retention in the higher education environment (Thomas et al., 2019; Romsa et al., 2017). With teaching, research, and service being the focal areas of the professoriate, it is reasonable to expect that faculty members have an ethical responsibility for providing a learning environment that promotes the success of students. For many students, faculty members are the pervasive point of contact during

their freshman year and beyond; therefore, the interactions between faculty and students are critical. While the classroom is the primary environment for learning, there are also opportunities for student faculty interactions in other settings such as practicums and internships, research labs, and student organizations. In a qualitative study by Tharani et al. (2017) involving 250 undergraduate nursing students, findings indicated wide variation in faculty expectations with the learning environment having a significant impact on student learning and emotional well-being. However, Micari and Pazos (2012) reported that faculty often overlook the impact of faculty student relations and attribute student success to talent and hard work. In another study by Schademan and Thompson (2016) with the subjects being first generation, low-income community college students, participants spoke "about teachers having faith in them or believing in their ability to succeed" (p. 208) as being important. One important implication of the findings was the need for institutions to bear greater responsibility for providing opportunities and resources for faculty to develop appropriate skills to nurture the success of their students.

One set of skills is related to overall teaching effectiveness. While it is considered essential for a member of the faculty to have an appropriate background in his/her content area, it is also important for the faculty member to possess the requisite knowledge of the cultural background of the students in their classes. One specific concept associated with instruction in settings characterized by diversity is culturally responsive instruction (Hilaski, 2020; Keehne et al., 2018). While this concept is often associated with P-12 instruction and educator preparation programs, developing a knowledge base associated with different cultural groups and accompanying pedagogical skills are relevant to higher education (Han et al., 2014; Pacansky-Brock et al., 2020).

Challenges Faced by Professors Attempting to Promote Student Well-Being

The success of students is impacted by numerous variables including faculty (Zerquera et al., 2018) and student noncognitive variables. While interactions between faculty and students are critical, faculty may or may not have the skills and knowledge base to help students navigate the challenges presented in university environments (Zerquera et al., 2018). In addition, institutions are experiencing a change in the composition of the student body which brings additional variables to bear on student success. The challenges students can face in the learning environment, covered within this article, include first-generation students, student noncognitive variables, stress and emotional discomfort within the classroom, and personality differences among students.

First-Generation Students

As a group the first-generation college student has been underrecruited and in many cases these students may not possess the skills necessary to navigate the bureaucracy of the institution (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2021). First generation students are likely to experience numerous challenges and as a group their retention and graduation rates are relatively low in comparison to continuing-generation students (Cahalan et al., 2020) As educators we have an obligation to "meet the students where they are" by helping them understand concepts central to course outcomes and considering their perspectives on curriculum-related issues relative to the curriculum. Winslow (2018) contended that some first-generation students, especially from rural areas, lacked self confidence in a larger setting and had difficulty making friends.

Student Noncognitive Variables

Likewise, noncognitive variables associated with students have been found to contribute to their success. Such variables may include academic self-efficacy, sense of belonging, academic motivation, and grit (Farruggia et al., 2018). Students may also lack the necessary strategies for coping with stressful situations (Coiro et al., 2017) associated with the learning environment both

in and outside the classroom. These students are also more likely to experience mental health issues and findings from a study reported by Geertshuis (2018) indicated that students' well-being is associated with their learning behaviors, affect, and academic achievement. In addition to some of the traditional non-academic variables impacting student success, COVID-19 has been found to impact students' mental health and their motivation to learn. In a recent survey conducted by Third Way (Hiler et al., 2021), 79 percent of the respondents were worried about their mental health and 60 percent indicated they were struggling to stay motivated to learn in an online environment.

Stress and Emotional Discomfort in the Classroom

While experiencing stress or emotional discomfort, our bodies have an automatic response, often with physiological symptoms that serve as protective factors. It is the body's way of keeping us safe in situations where there is a perceived threat (Tello, 2018). These reactionary responses have been categorized as fight, flight, freeze, or faint. The fight response causes a person to react to the stress or stimuli that triggers the automatic response. When a person flees or avoids the stimuli, it is classified as a flight response. When a person freezes, they lose the ability to move or acknowledge the stimuli. Fainting can occur when a person's heart rate drops, and they become unconscious. Interestingly, the same person can experience different responses based on the situation or scenario (Niermann et al., 2017). Learning to identify a perceived threat or a stressful situation can be helpful in lessening the body's physiological response because the person can mentally prepare an action plan. Lenz (2014) posits that with RCT techniques individuals can challenge dysfunctional behaviors and promote authenticity, empathy, and mutuality on the part of clients and students. In a supportive environment growth fostering relationships can develop.

Personality Differences Among Students

Each student in a classroom has their own unique personality that differs in a variety of ways, such as introverted or extroverted. These differences must be taken into consideration when attempting to make a learning environment that promotes academic success for students. Research has found that there are a number of differences between what introverts and extroverts need to be successful in the classroom (Weiser et al., 2018; Zalaznick, 2019). It has been found that extroverts prefer group activities and other types of work that involve interactions with their classmates, but introverts prefer work that requires self-reflection and working alone (Walker, 2007). The COVID-19 pandemic has led to more challenges that professors must try to overcome in order to help their students have academic success but some of these challenges have been especially hard to overcome due to the personality differences in their students (Audet et al., 2021). A study done before the pandemic found that introverts significantly prefer and do better in online classes than extroverts (Harrington, 2010).

<div align="center">Professional Performance Review</div>

Although students can face challenges from a variety of perspectives, feedback on their performance can facilitate the growth of self-efficacy (Lent, 2004; Wittner et al., 2022). Likewise, the implementation of a professional performance review process implies a level of trust between the student and the program faculty that builds on relationships. These relationships require a shared understanding of cultural backgrounds (Barker, 2011) at a level similar to effective student/advisor relationships. Success is a vital component of the counseling profession and starts when a student expresses interest in entering the counseling field. It is the responsibility of all counselors to intervene when students engage in behavior that may pose a threat to client welfare (Foster & McAdams, 2009). These can also be applied to the classroom setting for counselor

educators. Professors can be looking for red flags such as poor boundaries and deficient interpersonal skills (Foster & McAdams III, 2009; Kerl, et al., 2002). It is estimated that 3% of students are identified as "problem students" (Olkin & Gaughen, 1991, para 1).

Currently, there are various protocols at different universities for students in all stages of the educational process (Foster et al., 2009; Foster et al., 2014; Swank & Smith-Adcock, 2014). For students who are struggling, putting them on a remediation or support plan can be beneficial. The plan that is currently implemented has three different levels. Level one identifies the concern and provides support. Level two is created if an improvement hasn't been made. Support in level one or two can consist of outside counseling, additional supervision or a change in coursework. The third level is dismissal from the program. Since professors can incorporate counseling traits such as rapport building, validation, and empathy, it is important to look at the language we are using. Moving the counseling program from the term of remediation plan, which focuses on student challenges, to a support plan which focuses on the student from a holistic perspective to assist with challenges students are experiencing, and highlight their strengths (Henderson & Dufrene, 2013; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). Additionally, following CACREP standards for best practice (CACREP, 2016; Lumadue & Duffey, 1999) an effective method that ensures all students are reviewed and evaluated each semester with an assessment called a professional performance review (PPR's). This provides student feedback on ten different criteria ranging from academic work to ethical and legal boundaries.

Using Counseling Techniques to Promote Relationships and Self-efficacy

Lertora et al. (2020) posits when students engage in classroom experiences that foster good relationships, good things happen. Likewise, students can disconnect from a situation they perceive as negative. Relationships are reciprocal in the sense that individuals develop perceptions of their

self-worth based on their feelings about how they feel others see them. Faculty are in a position of power which if appropriately used can help foster self-efficacy on the part of the students. As such, the structure of classroom learning experiences are a critical component in promoting student well-being and success. As previously noted by Crumb and Haskins (2020), relational culture theory acknowledges the importance of counselor/client relationships and modeling these relationships in the classroom. Additionally, practicum and internship provide clinical experience which are facilitated by faculty and promotes the development of these skills on the part of the graduate students in counseling. The following techniques are designed to foster a growth learning environment for students of diverse backgrounds in counseling and other academic disciplines.

Students in higher education are more responsible for their academic performance than ever before. For many students, this is their first time living out on their own without the comfort and security of their family. With this added degree of freedom, students can either flourish or fluster. As professors, it is our job to help mentor the students to perform at their academic peak while also taking into account their mental and physical health. The use of certain skills traditionally used in a counseling relationship and setting may encourage both student well-being and success. While we expect these skills to be used within counseling sessions, their application in the classroom setting is likely to be beneficial as well.

Rapport Building

Rapport building is the relationship a person forms with another and is demonstrated in an academic setting when a professor shows interest and care for their students. Relational awareness is a critical attribute of CRT relative to self-development and wellbeing and connecting with others (Jordan, 2017). Professors who are caring and enthusiastic have reported receiving higher student satisfaction ratings (Filene, 2005). One way this can be accomplished is by learning students'

names at the beginning of the semester, so the experience feels more personal (Tice et al., 2005). Additionally, having weekly check-ins at the beginning of each class period. Check-ins may include lingering questions regarding upcoming assignments or material covered in the previous week, as well as how students are doing personally. One suggestion is to provide time in the beginning of each class for students to speak freely and gain support. This time is built into the class structure by including a reminder on a PowerPoint slide. This gives students the opportunity to discuss feelings about their current workload or their understanding of topics covered in the reading for that week. It also allows the time for students and the professor to clarify any ambiguity about upcoming assignments and demonstrates the professor's concern for the student's well-being. Relational development is important, and opportunities for all students to feel they have a voice builds on Miller's Relational Cultural Theory (1976) and can enhance students' perception of their ability to complete a task (Schunk, 1991).

While class content may be discussed, students may also comment and seek support for external life stressors. This provides the professor with a baseline of how students are doing not only academically, but emotionally as well. Considering Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943), i.e., if a student's basic needs are not being met, staying fully focused in class is going to be much more challenging. For example, if a student reports feeling burnt out, they may have difficulty meeting the academic demands of higher education (Love et al., 2020).

Finally, this check-in time provides the professor with background information regarding the student that they otherwise may not have been privy to. Given this information, the professor might choose to make course adjustments to items such as due dates to accommodate students. There is a fine balance between holding students accountable while still having empathy for their current situation, but this check-in time allows the professor to make well-informed decisions as

to how best to support student well-being. It is important for faculty to have an understanding of the cultural backgrounds of their students and developing a rapport with students builds on this understanding (Barker, 2011). RCT was an outgrowth of "efforts to better understand the importance of growth-fostering relationships in people's lives" (Jordan, 2017, p. 27). This perspective supports and builds upon a major goal of multiethnic education to reduce the pain and suffering of various groups due to a lack of understanding of various ethnic cultures (Banks, 1981. Banks (1981) posited "when individuals are forced to reject parts of their racial and ethnic cultures in order to experience success, problems are created for both individuals and society" (p. 26).

Validation

Validating another person allows that person to feel heard and respected. When we are invested in others, they may begin to invest more in themselves which can facilitate the growth of their self-efficacy. One way to facilitate this is through the use of validation, a basic tenet of RCT (Crumb & Haskins, 2020) When we validate another person, that does not mean that we necessarily agree with their behaviors, however, we are accepting their feelings which are influenced by their environment. This relational development becomes very important to their overall development (Banks, 2011). Validation by faculty provides a sense of safety within the learning environment. While this is important for all individuals, the concept of safety becomes more important for individuals in marginalized groups including different ethnic groups and individuals on the LGBTQ spectrum (Flores & Sheely-Moore, 2019; Jordan, 2017), and undergirded by RCT and the concept of self-efficacy. Students should have the space where they can question the material presented, think critically, form different opinions, engage in thought provoking discussions, and approach faculty with concerns without fear of judgment or retribution. An example would be a student turning in an assignment late and having points deducted as

outlined in the syllabus. The student then meets with the professor to discuss the situation. The professor could validate the student's frustration at having points deducted while remaining firm in the consequence of the points deduction. This also ties back into rapport building, where we provide students with the opportunity to voice their frustrations and possibly share more personal information about current life circumstances that may be impacting their learning and classroom behavior.

Empathy

Along with rapport building and validation, empathy is considered a fundamental counseling skill. Empathy is the ability to understand a person's feelings without having gone through the same experience and an integral concept within CRT (Lenz, 2014). Empathy is a skill that is used in everyday conversations and interactions and is a critical component of effective teaching (Meyers et al., 2019). Empathy can cause a student's demeanor to shift when the student feels validated which can enhance self-efficacy. For example, if a professor provides a suggestion for how to take future exams although they do not change the grade of the student's current exam that was of concern, the student may still walk away feeling like the interaction was positive (Smith, 2016). Jordan (2017) posited that to the extent possible, the presence of authenticity in relationships within appropriate boundaries "contributes to mutual growth and well-being" (p, 29). Furthermore, individuals who can model empathy for students struggling with their identity (Whitman & Biddell 2012), or from marginalized groups including LGBTQ (Jordan, 2017) as opposed to alienating them are much better able to help them work through challenging situations.

Professors and leaders within academics can practice empathy on a daily basis through various teaching techniques. There are two techniques in particular that can be useful for professors struggling with individuals who are more extroverted and tend to blurt out the answers

to questions in class, making it more difficult for introverts to get an opportunity to participate. It is important to allow the students time to process and answer the question (Tice et al., 2005). One technique is to ask students to take out a piece of paper at the beginning of class. When the professor asks a question, everyone writes down their responses or thoughts on the piece of paper while the professor makes sure to give the students some time to answer (typically a few minutes). This gives everyone an equal opportunity to think about what the professor said, which may be especially useful for students who do not process information as quickly. It also helps with some student's confidence who are worried about speaking in front of others. Students have reported that they find it easier to speak up in class if they already know what they are going to say, as it takes some of the fear away (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2011).

The second technique is to break the class into smaller groups with just a few people in each, while the professor circles around to the different groups. This allows people to voice their opinions and participate in smaller group settings which may be less intimidating for some. This technique has been found to be useful for those who identify as more introverted (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2011). These activities provide students an opportunity to have a voice in a non-threatening manner which can enhance the development of relationships and one's feeling about their abilities.

Using Grounding Techniques

While being able to identify stressful situations proactively is ideal, it is not always realistic. Teaching students positive and healthy coping skills are vital to their emotional development and academic success. With coping skills being utilized, prior to, during, or after a stressful event, grounding techniques are helpful when a student is in the middle of the automatic response (Farrell & Taylor, 2017). An example of an effective grounding technique is the 5,4,3,2,1

exercise, which can be done anywhere. The person completing the exercise utilizes their senses to identify objects around them. They identify five things that they can see, four things that they can feel or touch, three things they can hear, two things they can smell, and one thing they can taste. The purpose of this exercise is to reshift the focus of the student while reminding them they are in a safe place and help facilitate relationships in an environment characterized by diversity. This exercise can be very helpful for individuals on the LGBTQ spectrum and other marginalized groups who may not always feel safe in their environment and Flores and Sheely-Moore (2019) posit that as a feminist, social justice-oriented counseling approach, RCT can serve as a framework for addressing LGBTQ issues. Understanding how the different automatic reactive responses may manifest among our students can help us be more empathetic during conversations in and outside the classroom setting. One's perception of their self-efficacy can be impacted by how they perceive others feel about them; therefore, social context becomes an important component of success.

Mindfulness in the Classroom

Positive learning environments impact how students feel about themselves and others, and promote student success. This is extremely important in settings characterized by diversity and acknowledges the importance of relationships among the learners and the faculty members. Furthermore, how one perceives others feel about them is critical to self-efficacy growth. Faculty may also find it helpful to begin each of their classes with a mindfulness exercise to promote student focus, engagement, and learning, as well as assist in student creativity and their ability to cope with stress more effectively (Roeser et al., 2013). Mindfulness can be formal or informal done inside or outside of the classroom (Dougherty et al., 2020). After leading students in a few moments of deep breathing together (formal mindfulness), the professor may play a song and ask students to close their eyes and notice their thoughts, or bring something they are grateful for to

mind and meditate on it. Other exercises incorporate guided meditation, writing, or drawing. Students are given the opportunity to share their observations and reactions following the activity. In a society replete with self-awareness and focus, CRT posits we can extend our awareness to others in our relational world through meditative practices (Jordan, 2017).

In addition to promoting learning within class meetings, these activities promote self-awareness by encouraging students to observe their inner emotional world and body responses (Dye et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2020). After guided practice in class, students can continue to practice these activities on their own outside of the classroom. Additionally, students can partake in informal mindfulness such as disconnecting from technology, being in nature, listening to music etc. (Dougherty et al., 2020). While mindfulness can be incorporated into counseling classes, some universities are offering courses to improve students' resilience to stress (Galante et al., 2017).

Conclusion

Student success has become an important aspect of higher education and has become one of several metrics being used by some states to determine funding to public institutions (Favero & Rutherford, 2020; Wayt & LaCost, 2016) and by institutions as part of the program review process. Challenges facing students' success and well-being are multi-dimensional in nature, and an integration of Miller's Relational Cultural Theory (1976) and Bandura's Framework of Social Cognitive Theory (1986) can provide a foundation for pedagogical approaches for faculty as they work with students in the higher education setting. There are numerous factors that can influence student success and one of the variables is the faculty who carry responsibility for designing and implementing the learning environment through their teaching, supervision of practicum/internships, labs, and so forth. While faculty carry the responsibility for in class learning experiences and supervision of labs, practicum/internships, there are inherent challenges

associated with these responsibilities. Changes have been occurring in the composition of the student body with non-traditional, first generation, and part-time students becoming more prevalent on campus.

Along with the changes in student composition, institutions are no longer just working with the traditional age college student, but are also having to address differing noncognitive variables, motivations, and so forth. Faculty and staff are confronted with a need to address mental health challenges, and other similar challenges, and must adjust both in and out of class learning environments to help students address varied issues that can impact their success. One concept designed to facilitate the success of counseling students is the implementation of a professional performance review process that provides students with feedback on their performance while at the same time ensures graduates have demonstrated the knowledge and skills required for admission to the profession. While the profession of counseling has been a critical component of higher education, many of the strategies used by counselors can be effectively used by other faculty to help students successfully navigate challenges they face as members of the higher education community. As a profession, counselor educators can play a role in helping other faculty through professional development experiences and mentoring how to effectively use strategies in their classrooms and other educational environments to promote student success and well-being. The development of positive relational experiences are essential for the success of students and members of the faculty, and individuals effectiveness becomes greater as their level of self-efficacy increases in an environment that has become increasingly diverse. The success of our students is critical to the existence of higher education and how members of the faculty interact with their students in the varied learning environments is a key variable in the overall success of the students.

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