Learner-Centered Pedagogy: Considerations for Application in a Didactic Course

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A learner-centered teaching approach is well known in higher education but has not been fully addressed within counselor education. Instructors who adopt this approach value a collaborative approach to teaching and learning, one that honors students' wisdom and contributions. Teachers create a learning environment encouraging students to actively engage in and take ownership of their learning experiences, an environment inspiring students to think deeply about how they might apply what they are learning to their future practice. It may be particularly challenging for counselor educators to incorporate learner-centered teaching strategies into didactic courses that are traditionally heavy in content versus smaller experiential courses such as practica and internships. In this article, learner-centered teaching is described, and a case study demonstrates how a learner-centered approach may be applied to a traditionally didactic counseling course.

Keywords: **pedagogy, teaching, learner-centered, counselor education, didactic**

For the past decade, there has been a call in higher education for a shift from teacher-centered methods of instruction to learner-centered pedagogy (Brown, 2003; Crick & McCombs, 2006; Harris & Cullen, 2008). Educators who use a learner-centered model view learning as nonlinear, multidimensional and a phenomenon that occurs relationally within a social context (Cornelius-White, 2007). Their use of learner-centered pedagogy favors a democratic approach to teaching that shifts the instructor from the center of the learning environment to a more peripheral position. This shift is achieved by increasing students' opportunities to actively participate in the classroom and engage in self-directed learning outside the classroom, as well as providing forums through which they can share learned information with peers (Wright, 2011). Educators who use learner-centered pedagogy favor differentiated modalities to facilitate learning, in contrast to instructors who use teacher-centered models of teaching that rely on lecture as the primary means of instruction.

While learner-centered literature is well known within the domain of higher education, as of yet it has not been thoroughly addressed within the scope of counselor education. Scholars and researchers in counselor education have focused on what content should be included in curricula (Granello, 2000) or specific teaching techniques used in class (May, 2004; Shepard & Brew, 2005; Stinchfield, 2006), rather than comprehensive approaches toward teaching that are helpful for engaging student learning. Yet several pedagogies are present in the counselor education literature such as contextual teaching (Granello, 2000), constructivist pedagogy (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998), experiential teaching approaches (Grant, 2006), and transparent counseling pedagogy (Dollarhide, Smith, & Lemberger, 2007). These authors have described alternative and innovative methods for engaging student learners.

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Teaching practices such as contextual teaching, constructivist pedagogy, experiential teaching approaches and transparent counseling pedagogy share commonalities with, and reflect certain ideals of, learner-centered pedagogy. We believe that learner-centered pedagogy could represent an overarching theoretical umbrella, under which previous teaching practices presented in the counseling literature could represent different forms of learner-centered instruction. In this way, learner-centered pedagogy may serve as a conceptual framework that educators can use to provide an impactful learning experience for counseling students.

We provide a brief description of the learning needs of counselor education students based on the demands they will face working as professional counselors, followed by an explanation of how learner-centered pedagogy may ultimately help professional counselors meet these demands. A case study is then presented to demonstrate how learner-centered pedagogy was applied in a couples counseling class.

Preparing Counselor Trainees for Professional Practice: Facilitating Deep Learning

Master's degree programs in counselor education are designed to prepare students to begin working as professional counselors upon graduation. To learn to be professional counselors, students must develop a sense of comfort with ambiguity and a capacity for independent and reflective thinking (Dollarhide et al., 2007). Counseling students also must develop competent clinical skills and adequate knowledge to pass licensure examinations. Traditionally, courses thought to be didactic (e.g., theories, ethics, diagnosis, couples and family counseling) have tended to emphasize the acquisition of important content knowledge. In contrast, seminar courses (e.g., prepracticum, practicum, internship) are oriented to experiential learning and the development of clinical skills (Sperry, 2012). Counselor educators have designed curricula with the dual focus of acquiring important content knowledge and the development of clinical skills. Yet it is unclear what approaches to teaching are helpful for preparing counselor trainees for the demands of being a professional counselor, particularly approaches to teaching didactic courses.

One means of gaining insight into this question of helpful teaching approaches to didactic or seminar courses is to explore what counseling students and practicing counselors believe is important in their training. A comprehensive review of the literature revealed only a few articles that offer some evidence of what students and practicing counselors perceive as important learning experiences during their graduate degree programs, experiences that help to prepare them for professional counseling careers. Orlinsky, Botermans, Rønnestad, and the SPR Collaborative Research Network (2001) found that professional therapists recall practical and experiential learning as most helpful in facilitating their professional development. Similarly, Furr and Carroll (2003) found that experiential learning activities and activities that involve immediate application of knowledge have a greater impact on students' development than cognitive teaching strategies. Grant (2006) supported these research findings; she posited that counselor education programs should expand beyond didactic-intensive approaches to teaching to incorporate more opportunities for experiential learning and activities that generate reflective thinking. Grant surmised that these approaches to teaching are helpful for preparing counselor trainees for the complexity of working with challenging client populations.

Experiential and applied learning are important facets of learner-centered pedagogy that can help instructors move away from didactic-intensive styles of teaching and enhance deeper approaches to learning in their students. Researchers have identified a deep approach as one of two approaches

students take toward learning (Diseth, 2007; Parpala, Lindblom-Ylänne, Komulainen, Litmanen, & Hirsto, 2010). A deep approach toward learning is characterized by students' intent to understand the richness and meaning of what they are studying (Diseth, 2007). The second is a surface approach, which prioritizes the reproduction of knowledge with precision rather than depth of understanding, as students' motivation tends to be based on minimizing their chances of being wrong (Parpala et al., 2010). A surface approach to learning can be compared to the processes of a copying machine—students are presented with information, which they attempt to reproduce neatly and accurately, so that the copy mirrors the original as closely as possible. Students who adopt a deep approach toward a learning task are typically regarded as having intrinsic motivations for learning (Diseth, 2007). Such students are more likely to conceptualize, problem solve, and be reflective during a learning task as they wrestle to construct personal knowledge and understanding.

Students' perception of their learning environment is a factor that influences the type of learning approach they use during the course. Some researchers have found a positive correlation between learner-centered classroom environments and students developing deep approaches to learning (Vanthournout, Donche, Gijbels, & Van Petegem, 2004; Wilson & Fowler, 2005). Students who have positive perceptions of a learning environment (e.g., see meaning and purpose in a course, perceive that what they are learning will be useful to them, are stimulated by classroom activities, perceive the classroom as a safe place) tend to adopt deep approaches toward learning. Students who hold a negative perception of a learning environment (e.g., do not see purpose or meaning in a course, are not intellectually stimulated, struggle to grasp what is being taught, feel unsafe or overwhelmed in the classroom) are more likely to adopt surface approaches toward learning (Lindblom-Ylänne, 2004).

Counselor educators are tasked with creating an engaging learning environment in didactic-oriented classes that invites students to learn thoughtfully and deeply as they prepare for professional counseling practice. Creating an environment that counseling students perceive as meaningful, useful and safe may encourage students to use deep approaches to learning. Counseling students who use a deep approach toward their learning may develop greater personal meaning and understanding about what they are learning, so they can more effectively apply what they have learned when working as professional counselors. Aspects of leaner-centered pedagogy may be useful to counselor educators in creating a learning environment that is perceived as positive by counseling students, whether in the context of a didactic or seminar course.

Teacher-Centered and Learner-Centered Pedagogies

A factor that can influence how counselor trainees perceive their learning environment is the teaching approach used by their instructor. Teacher-centered and learner-centered pedagogies are differing approaches to teaching that are based on contrasting ideological assumptions.

Teacher-Centered Pedagogy
Teacher-centered pedagogy is associated with traditional conceptions of teaching in which instructors prioritize acquiring pertinent content knowledge as a primary learning objective (Brown, 2003). The teacher is the fulcrum of the learning environment, having a greater wealth of knowledge about the subject being taught, relative to students' inexperience and lack of knowledge (Wright, 2011). This distinction can engender a hierarchical relationship between teacher and students in the classroom. Teacher-student relationships primarily are defined by intellectual explorations chosen by the teacher, in which the teacher is an arbiter and distributor of knowledge and students are receivers of knowledge (Wright, 2011).

Instructors using a teacher-centered approach predominantly rely on lecture to transmit knowledge to students, and typically prioritize the acquisition of content, as students are evaluated on their ability to accurately reproduce knowledge that they are provided (Brown, 2003). While lecturing is acknowledged in the literature as a tool that can be helpful for stimulating student learning, instructors who rely heavily on lecture-intensive approaches have come under criticism and have been linked with students adopting surface approaches to learning (Diseth, 2007). Bain (2004) cautioned that instructors' use of didactic-intensive forms of instruction may stunt students' curiosity and appetite for learning, as students may become accustomed to being passive receptacles for information. Various authors in the counseling literature have posited that supplementing lecture with alternative or innovative teaching approaches can help engage student learning so that students can more effectively access and apply what they have learned in their work as professional counselors (May, 2004; Shephard & Brew, 2005; Stinchfield, 2006).

Learner-Centered Pedagogy

Learner-centered pedagogy emerged from constructivist learning theory and represents a countermovement to traditional teacher-centered pedagogical practices (Baeten, Dochy, & Struyven, 2012; McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2002). Educators who use learner-centered pedagogy view knowledge through lenses of social and relational processes and therefore prioritize students' individual processes of constructing personal knowledge and understanding rather than rote mastery of course content (Baeten et al., 2012). These instructors must be comfortable with the uncertainty and needed flexibility that come with self-reflection and change, both in themselves and their students (McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2002). Such instructors place learning at the center of the classroom environment, where both teacher and students share responsibility for creating a meaningful learning experience. In contrast, teacher-centered instructors assume the majority of responsibility for teaching and ensuring that learning is occurring, and they represent the most prominent aspect of the learning environment rather than having that space filled by the topic of interest.

The primary task of an instructor using a learner-centered approach is to create an environment that is conducive to learning. Although a strong grasp of course content and use of lecture may be helpful in this endeavor, they represent only two of several important components of such a learning environment. Brown (2003) stated that the focus on the process of learning and the context in which learning occurs is considered to be as integral as, or more integral than, the specific content knowledge presented to students. McCombs (as cited in Cornelius-White, 2007) described some characteristics of learning environments that are based on learner-centered assumptions:

> [Learning is] non-linear, recursive, continuous, complex, relational, and natural in humans. . . . Learning is enhanced in contexts where learners have supportive relationships, have a sense of ownership and control over learning processes, and can learn with and from each other in safe and trusting learning environments. (p. 7)

Two important components that learner-centered teachers consider when establishing a positive learning environment are providing supportive relationships in the classroom and creating a space that feels safe and trusting to student learners (Weimer, 2002). Instructors using a learner-centered approach foster supportive relationships and cultivate a safe learning environment by diffusing power differentials between the teacher and students. Instructors diffuse power differentials through intentionally creating opportunities for students to become active in the classroom, honoring and

utilizing student learners' individual experiences and perspectives, and treating students as partners in the learning process (Crick & McCombs, 2006). Thus, instead of the instructor being the primary arbiter of content, intellectual queries and structure in a classroom, a learner-centered instructor favors democratic and collaborative approaches to teaching that empower students to be active participants in their learning (Wright, 2011). An example of this practice occurs when an instructor intentionally defers from immediately answering a student's question and rather redirects the question to the students in the classroom. Such an approach diminishes the instructor's role as "expert" in the classroom; connotes a belief that student learners possess the collective knowledge, experiences and perspectives to provide useful insight to answer the question; and encourages students to become intellectually active in the classroom.

Such collaborative learning is an important aspect of learner-centered teaching since collaboration is a social process believed to help students develop problem-solving skills, challenge their beliefs through honoring many viewpoints in the classroom and construct deeper personal understandings of course content (Brown, 2003). Instructors can nurture collaborative relationships by following two learner-centered principles: students prefer to have a sense of ownership and control over their learning experiences, and students should receive opportunities to teach each other what they have learned (Weimer, 2002). Therefore, student learners' preferences and opinions are taken into account when possible during course planning (e.g., having a class discussion about setting class rules) and when selecting reading assignments or major course projects (e.g., allowing student learners to create their own projects; providing student learners with a variety of assignments from which to select their course projects). Student learners then perceive that they are able to shape their learning experience in a meaningful way. After students have engaged in self-directed learning projects outside the classroom, they are then given opportunities to deepen their learning through sharing what they have learned with their classmates (Brown, 2003).

In addition to increased autonomy to construct their learning experiences, student learners receive autonomy to pursue areas of intellectual interest in the classroom. Learner-centered instructors provide opportunities for their students to explore topics of interest in depth by adhering less strictly to course content (Baeten, Struyven, & Dochy, 2013). Course content is used as a starting point for stimulating intellectual exploration in students. Students are encouraged to explore content and topics of interest when their instructors create space for inquiry, discussion or other spontaneous learning experiences in the classroom (Weimer, 2002). Thus, learner-centered instructors favor flexible approaches to teaching that create space for students to learn about topics of interest with greater depth, rather than teacher-centered approaches that ensure a broad coverage of course content.

Student learners' active role and sense of autonomy during class is counterbalanced by learner-centered instructors taking a more peripheral role, acting as guides who encourage students on their own path of inquiry and understanding (Wright, 2011). Teachers using a learner-centered approach help facilitate students' learning interests as they arise by guiding discussion and inquiry, while being mindful to incorporate various learning experiences in the classroom. Incorporating flexible and varied teaching practices (e.g., lecture, multimedia, experiential activities, discussion) is a key aspect of facilitating a learner-centered classroom environment so that a wider range of student learner preferences can be satisfied (Brown, 2003). Teachers using a learner-centered approach attempt to formulate their teaching practices based on the learning preferences of students in their classes, unlike instructors who use teaching practices that are based on the instructors' preferences.

By teaching with a learner-centered focus, counselor educators may increase the likelihood that trainees will perceive their classroom as a positive learning environment. Counselor trainees' positive

appraisal of a learning environment can help them to see the purpose and meaning in their learning experience, which may in turn influence their use of a deep approach to learning. Using a deep approach to learning, in which counselor trainees are reflective and ascribe personal meaning to knowledge that is learned, can help prepare trainees for future work as professional counselors when they will be required to think independently and tolerate ambiguity (Dollarhide et al., 2007). Therefore, counselor educators teaching didactic classes with a learner-centered focus are concerned with helping counselor trainees develop *how* they think (e.g., critically, reflectively, complexly) rather than simply *what* they think (i.e., memorization of specific content). This phenomenon is demonstrated in the following case study.

Case Study: A Commentary

When Randy (first author) first asked me (Jane; second author) to join in this project about learner-centered teaching, I was excited to do so. At the time, Randy was a doctoral candidate and I was a faculty member in a counselor education program. I consider myself to be student-centered, an effective facilitator of student learning and a postmodernist who takes a nonexpert stance with students. Randy asked me to develop a case study of a traditionally didactic course taught from a learner-centered course approach. Again, I was excited to do so, thinking that this would be an easy task, in light of my learner-centered approach to teaching.

Yet when I began to think about a course to use as a case study, one that would demonstrate a learner-centered approach, I began to doubt that I was truly learner-centered. The course I was considering was a couples counseling course that I had taught for years, a traditionally "didactic" course. Though I had incorporated a number of experiential activities into this course, I continued to lecture frequently (about half of the class time), believing that students benefit from listening to and asking questions about the theories and techniques they are learning. So was I learner-centered? Did I even have a class that I could present as a case study?

Randy and I had lively conversations that expanded my thinking about learner-centered teaching. I told him that I was struggling to differentiate experiential learning from learner-centered teaching, and that I did not think I was as learner-centered as I had believed. Experiential learning, contextual learning and problem-based learning all became a bit of a muddle for me, as there is considerable overlap between these concepts about teaching. Randy noted Barrett's (2007) view that teaching does not have to be either-or, teacher-centered or learner-centered, but can be on a continuum between both. With this idea in mind, I reconsidered the couples counseling course and reflected on ways that my teaching might evidence a learner-centered approach.

The couples counseling course that I teach typically has 20–25 master's students enrolled, along with a few doctoral students. It could be considered a content-heavy, didactic course covering couples therapy theories, focusing on concepts and techniques specific to couples counseling and their application in the therapeutic setting. As mentioned, I lecture in the course about these concepts and techniques and also provide students with experiences through class activities and homework assignments that aim to help students think about how they might eventually apply their learning to counseling practice.

I set up one such in-class experience by inviting an underrepresented couple, often a same-sex couple, to class to talk about their experiences as a couple. Either I or a doctoral student interview the couple about the development of their relationship, experiences they have had with others

recognizing (or not recognizing) their relationship, misperceptions heterosexual counselors might have about them as a couple, and so forth. The hope is that students will gain some understanding of the issues and oppression that face nondominant couples.

Before the class session during which the couple visits, I ask six students to serve as a team who will reflect on the interview at its conclusion. Members of this reflecting team (Andersen, 1991) talk together about what stood out to them from the interview, what they saw as the couple's strengths and how they understood the couple's challenges (especially as related to their couple status in the eyes of others), holding this conversation together as the other class members and the couple quietly listen. At the conclusion of the team's conversation, the couple respond to what they have heard, and the rest of the students have the opportunity to comment and ask the couple questions.

I consider this activity to be learner-centered, since much of the conversation is driven by the students on the reflecting team and the class as a whole. Yet it also is a structured activity, guided and facilitated by me as the instructor. I am very intentional about how I structure this activity. For instance, I would not have a class immediately start interacting with the couple, perhaps in an effort to protect the couple. Rather, the structure is intended to give students time to think about the couple and their life circumstances, time to be thoughtful about what they wish to say to the couple. In this sense, I orchestrate the experience, though eventually allow for improvisation by students. As the conductor and facilitator, I hope to encourage all the individual, unique voices of the students while also sharing responsibility with students for creating a moment that is meaningful and causes reflection and learning.

In sharing this responsibility, I have to share power with the students (as all facilitators must do) by having them interact with the couple during the reflecting team process and the following large group discussion. I cannot control the student responses, nor would I want to. Yet I have my moments of concern that a student will be insensitive to the couple, perhaps even add to the oppression they have experienced throughout their relationship. Being more learner-centered does not mean that I fully trust, at all times, all that students have to offer; it means that I believe the risk is worth the potential gain.

After this experience, students write a reflection paper about what they learned from the interview with the couple and the following classroom conversations and what questions linger for them. Students (perhaps straight students) often write that they have a new perspective on gay couples, realizing that many of their challenges are similar to challenges faced by all couples, gay or straight. They also reflect on the many ways that gay couples are discriminated against, often sharing their surprise at instances of discrimination that the couple has experienced. In their course evaluations at the end of the semester, students often comment that this classroom experience is the highlight of the course, the piece they remember most.

In addition, a homework assignment in the couples class complements the in-class couples interview. Outside class, students are asked to conduct two interviews with couples in different phases of their couple developmental cycle. Students are asked to interview a nondominant couple (e.g., gay, lesbian, interracial, interreligious) for at least one of these interviews in order to better understand some of the concerns these couples have due to living in our society, concerns that would most likely not be experienced by more highly represented couples (e.g., straight, same race, same religion). Students then write about and share in class what they learned from these interviews. As with the in-class interview, this out-of-class assignment is an experiential activity that hopefully expands students' notions of who couples are, what their concerns are as a couple and how they find

satisfaction as a couple. The goal of both the in-class and out-of-class interviews is to help students gain multiple perspectives to aid them in their future work with couples in counseling.

Although I greatly value experiential learning (such as described above), I also share information with students through a lecture format and, in that sense, take on somewhat of an expert role. Some educators may assume a nonexpert role much of the time, serving primarily as a facilitator of students' learning through application and experience. Tärnvik (2007) even stated that the teacher need not be overly familiar with the material being taught. Rather, a teacher's role is to create experiences for students. Though this approach may work for some, it does not fit with my philosophy of teaching. It is hard to imagine asking students to get close to course content if I do not have strong knowledge of the material. Being learner-centered does not mean that there are not times when I help students better understand the material, either by asking questions for them to respond to or by directly telling them about the content. Though this is an "expert" stance, I have come to believe that being learner-centered does not mean that, at *all* times, I let students take the lead while I follow. Learner-centered ways of teaching do not have to be either-or—that is, either I totally give control to students or I am teacher-centered and take full control. Rather, teaching can be both-and; there are times to give more control in the classroom to students and there are times to take back the reins. The skill, or perhaps the art, of learner-centered teaching may be to discern when it is best to do one or the other. In the in-class experience discussed above, I was intentional in setting up the structure for the couple's experience with the class (I controlled this), as well as opening up space for student involvement (during the reflecting team experience and the following group discussion). This notion of opening up space for students to learn seems to be at the core of learner-centered teaching. In reflection on Parker Palmer's (1990) quote "to teach is to create a space," O'Reilley (1998) wrote the following:

> These are revolutionary words, because most of us think in terms of filling a space: filling the number of minutes between the beginning and end of class, filling the student's notebook, filling the student's head. . . . To "create a space" acknowledges both our sphere of responsibility and our lack of control. (p. 2)

It is exciting, although rather scary, to think about both "our sphere of responsibility and our lack of control" (O'Reilley, 1998, p. 2). This open space is less certain than space that I fill and presents certain questions for me, such as "What will students say?," "Will I know how to respond to what they say?" and "Will they say anything at all?" Yet it also is troubling to think that there are no spaces during a class that provide students with the opportunity for improvisation, expression and contribution.

When I teach classes such as the couples therapy course, I find myself often reflecting on how I can balance teaching a large class, covering content that is essential to the subject and creating space for my students to interact with the content (to improvise). There are many ways to accomplish this task, but I have found that when I lecture I tend to conceptualize the content as a starting point for student engagement, rather than an end point. As such, when I lecture I try to leave space open for student inquiry and for discussion to occur naturally, rather than sticking rigidly to my teaching agenda. Though students certainly benefit from learning important conceptual knowledge, it has been my experience that some of the richest learning experiences for both students and me occur during spontaneous discussions that begin with the lecture material and end in a place I did not plan for or anticipate. My hope is that rich discussions, often filled with ambiguity and complexity, contribute to students' preparation for their multifaceted work as counselors.

Limitations of Learner-Centered Pedagogy and Future Research

There is a danger in thinking of teacher-centered and learner-centered methods of teaching as dichotomous and discrete. This either-or simplification may be appropriate for generating clear theoretical distinctions, but it is not appropriate for capturing the complex practices of teachers and teaching (Barrett, 2007). It would probably be inaccurate to describe most teachers as being either teacher-centered or learner-centered. In practice, teachers draw on a variety of pedagogical influences, which manifest themselves in a blend of approaches that are unique to that individual (Barrett, 2007). It may be more helpful to conceptualize teacher-centered and learner-centered pedagogy as ideological bookends that exist on a continuum. Thus, an approach to teaching could be considered more teacher-centered or more learner-centered, rather than either teacher-centered or learner-centered.

Although some researchers have provided a favorable outlook on learner-centered pedagogy (Vanthournout et al., 2004; Wilson & Fowler, 2005), other researchers have found that students may learn best through teacher-centered approaches (Baeten et al., 2012) or a combination of teacher-centered and learner-centered pedagogical approaches (Baeten et al., 2013). These mixed findings, in conjunction with limited pedagogical research in counselor education, highlight a need for future research to investigate student learner preferences in master's counseling programs. A fruitful direction for future research would be to explore the perceptions of recent graduates who are now working in professional counseling environments to gain an understanding of what novice counselors perceive as being helpful pedagogical practices during their master's program. These graduates could offer valuable insight into what teaching practices were most helpful for preparing them for the demands they face working as novice professional counselors. Greater understanding of what pedagogical practices are preferred by students in master's programs in counselor education, from the perspective of counselor trainees or novice professional counselors, could help educators become more learner-centered by allowing them to tailor their own teaching practices to meet the needs of student learners in their classrooms.

Another area of possible research to investigate is how counselor education doctoral students learn to teach. Researchers could review syllabi of college teaching courses to examine how doctoral students are being taught to teach, particularly noting if and how the syllabi reflect a learner-centered or teacher-centered approach. Researchers also could interview counselor education doctoral students and recent graduates to explore ways they learned to be instructors, especially ways that reflect learner-centered or teacher-centered approaches. Learning more about how doctoral students are being taught to teach will illuminate current teaching practices in counselor education at the doctoral level and assist counselor educators to thoughtfully and intentionally examine their beliefs about teaching and make corresponding changes to their courses.

Conclusion

Counselor educators can benefit from being reflective about our own teaching practices. Thinking about learner-centered pedagogy may be a useful way to reflect on one's teaching practice and to consider integrating other pedagogical practices into one's own style of teaching. Although some counselor educators may identify as being either teacher-centered or learner-centered, it is likely that many will see merit in both approaches. It is not necessary for counselor educators to wholly endorse learner-centered pedagogy as their preferred teaching identity in order to infuse learner-centered principles into their teaching. General learner-centered principles compatible with diverse teaching styles and classroom settings include the following: assessing the learning needs and interests

of students in the classroom as a starting point for making decisions about what will be taught, creating spaces during class time where spontaneous learning can occur, and providing opportunities for autonomous and self-directed learning experiences (Brown, 2003). Infusing learning-centered pedagogy into one's teaching may facilitate a deep learning experience for students, which will augment their development as emergent counselors.

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