Rubrics as a Tool for Managing Suitability for Practice Concerns

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Introductions

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Scoring rubrics are key to effective evaluation of addiction counseling students’ academic work products.

Rubrics have yet to reach their full potential as tools for assessing addiction counseling students’ suitability for practice, which is a key piece of counselor educators’ gatekeeping role.

 Appropriately-developed scoring rubrics for addictions coursework should include assessment of attitudes and behavioral markers for suitability for practice.
Mutual Information Sharing

• My goal is to encourage discussion, not to persuade

• What are your experiences and observations?
Are These Situations Familiar?

• Student earns high grades but faculty are concerned

• Talking with the student has not produced meaningful change, or . . .

• No one talks with the student

• Once in fieldwork, suitability for practice issues cannot be ignored, or . . .

• Student makes it through fieldwork to encounter issues later
TAP 21: Addiction Counseling Competencies

- Suitability for practice relates to attitudes across all four transdisciplinary foundations and 8 practice dimensions.


- Transdisciplinary Foundation IV: Professional Readiness (p. 178)
Accreditation

• NASAC requires adherence to TAP 21 while not explicitly mentioning suitability to practice

• Graduate programs require attention to suitability to practice (e.g., CACREP)
Activity: Your STP Concerns

• Take 3 minutes with your group to generate 5-10 STP concerns that matter to you.

• Compare your list to another group's list.

• How are these being monitored/managed currently?
What Else is Being Done?

- Intention statements
- Separate meetings about STP concerns
- Standalone instruments to tap counselor dispositions
- Hoping for the best

They will see the light and choose to change
Mature out of the problem
Self select out
Premises

• Suitability for practice competencies should be monitored throughout a program so that emergency gatekeeping does not have to happen at the end of a program.

• Rubrics that are embedded into coursework are a way to continuously monitor this in an organic way.

• Policies/procedures should have teeth. Exit ramps should be built into programs that new students know are there from the start.
It Follows That

• It should not be possible to earn (high) passing grades in courses in the presence of attitudes and behaviors that are inconsistent with those of a professional counselor.

Stated another way:

• Appropriate beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are intrinsic to competent counseling. Therefore, by definition, if these are breached, a student did not meet the course competencies at a high level.
Advantages of Embedded Rubrics

• Communicates that STP issues are important enough to monitor continuously

• Opportunity to reinforce positive attitudes/behavior

• If documented in a central location, program can track a student’s growing into the role of a counselor

• Provides basis for remediation plans
What Is so Great about Rubrics?

• They are aspirational – students know what they are expected to know/do and what constitutes each level of performance.

• Rubrics are learning tools as well as assessments.

• Rubrics force instructors and course developers to be mindful in course preparation.

• Clear connection between learning goals and performance standards.
What’s a Rubric?

• A scoring guide with criteria and performance levels.
• Can be simple or highly descriptive.
• A checklist could be considered the simplest form.
• Can use rubrics for written work, oral presentations, projects, and authentic assessments such as having students conduct biopsychosocial assessments, case conceptualizations for counseling scenarios.
Structured Observation Guides

• Rubrics without a rating scale

• I don’t like these because they do not include performance levels to coach student performance

• Qualitative notes as feedback.

• Example: practicing a clinical interview. Only qualitative feedback on rapport, active listening, use of prompts, etc.
Holistic Scoring Guides

Not helpful for gatekeeping because they are:

• general
• summative, used to make decisions
• not intended to provide formative feedback
Highly Descriptive Rubrics –YES!

• These take time to develop.

• The rubric development comes before writing the assignment.
Building a Descriptive Rubric

• List what you are looking for in the student work

• Create the rating scale

  • Define at least three levels of proficiency
  • Name (not number) the levels (example: non-performance, basic, proficient, distinguished)
  • Describe each criterion at each level
  • Assign point for each level of proficiency
Weighting Criteria on Rubrics

• Examples:

  If not open to feedback from peers for a presentation can still pass but not a score over 70%.

  If bias, prejudice expressed in written work, might still pass but not a score over 70%.

  And there are “deal breakers” where an assignment will automatically be scored zero because the behavior/attitude is egregious.
## Example: Journaling Assignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Performance</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timely journaling following T-group</strong></td>
<td>Does not journal or submits for grading more than 1 day after group session. Journals are ineligible to earn points after 3 days</td>
<td>Submits journal entry within one day of the group session</td>
<td>Journals immediately following group session and submits for grading before class is dismissed</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>5 points</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respectful written communication</strong></td>
<td>Journal contains disrespectful language or attitudes that do not reflect those expected of professional counselors</td>
<td>Journal contains only respectful language, even when describing complex interactions or conflict</td>
<td>Journal reflects emerging professional-level language and content that reflects respect for diversity and intellectual humility.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>30 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awareness of group dynamics</strong></td>
<td>Reflects on topics but not dynamics discussed in group or provides a superficial summary of the session</td>
<td>Reflects on 1 group dynamic that was present in the session and describes it accurately</td>
<td>Reflects on the meaning of at least 2 group dynamics that were present in the session and describes them accurately</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>25 points</td>
<td>30 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal evaluation</strong></td>
<td>No personal evaluation is present; even if evaluative language is present (e.g., “I did okay today”)</td>
<td>Specific examples of what you did well or what you could have done better are present</td>
<td>Specific examples of what you did well are present. A plan for how you can improve next time is present</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>25 points</td>
<td>30 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Features of the Next Example

Even ONE score of BASIC is problematic and should be addressed

Points are not relevant
Features of this Example

• What if all scores are Adequate?

• Can look for improvement over time/courses

• Good rubrics are foundations for advising/mentoring discussions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BASIC</th>
<th>ADEQUATE</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication with Peers</td>
<td>Communication is lacking or sometimes confrontational or aggressive. Listening skills are insufficiently developed.</td>
<td>Communication is appropriate. At times listening skills could be used to better advantage.</td>
<td>Communication with peers is professional and respectful in tone. Listening skills are well developed. Disagreements or misunderstandings are respectfully negotiated. Empathy is demonstrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with Faculty</td>
<td>A pattern of unprofessional (rude) communication with faculty is present. Disregards faculty instructions or feedback.</td>
<td>Communication with faculty is consistently professional/respectful in tone.</td>
<td>Communication with faculty is professional/respectful in tone. Faculty input is sought. Takes responsibility for maintaining appropriate communication with faculty to meet course goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Diversity</td>
<td>Beliefs/attitudes that are intolerant towards diversity are present. This may be overtly expressed opinions or insensitivity to the impact of sexist, racist, or non-inclusive language.</td>
<td>Respect for diversity and the importance of inclusive language is demonstrated.</td>
<td>Respect for diversity and the importance of inclusive language is demonstrated. An understanding of the centrality of respect for diversity to the counseling role is demonstrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td>Challenges with emotional regulation are evident (e.g. frustration tolerance; thinking before speaking)</td>
<td>Emotional regulation is sufficient to engage sufficiently and appropriately in the course.</td>
<td>Emotional regulation is consistent with that of a professional counselor. Example: can disagree with a person and still engage in respectful dialogue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management</td>
<td>A pattern of challenges with self-management is evident (e.g. arriving late, leaving early, not participating actively in class, not following instructions).</td>
<td>Self-management is sufficient to engage sufficiently and appropriately in the course.</td>
<td>Self-management is consistent with that of a professional counselor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What about Culture

- Behaviors should be understood in their cultural context

- Letourneau’s (2016) collaborative and multiperspectival decision-making model for addressing problematic behaviors in counseling students

- Problematic behaviors (not label students as incompetent, etc.)
Activity: Brainstorm Your Own Rubric

• In your group, think of an activity in your curriculum that you would
Rubrics can Align with Program Goals

Program goals > Course Learning Objectives > Assignments

Some program goals have to do with behaviors, attitudes, dispositions of professional counselors
Sundry

• Temperamentally/attitudinally unsuited for now

• Student portfolios are great but not that useful for suitability for practice/gatekeeping concerns

• Students can learn how to assess their own and their peers’ performance.

• Only assess what matters
References

• Addiction Counseling Competencies. The Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes of Professional Practice. Technical Assistance Publication (TAP) Series 21. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857


Thank YOU!

• For your time and attention

• For sharing your wisdom

• For the amazing work you do with students every day