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Assessing Student Learning in the CECP Training Programs

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"Assessing Student Learning in the CECP Training Programs"

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Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology (CECP)

University Assessment Grant Fellows 2004-2005
Presentation, March 17, 2005

Issues:

There was a need to gather feedback from graduated Master's students about the effectiveness of the training programs in the Department (interest, accreditation).

Feedback from this source had been very limited and largely anecdotal, yet these individuals provide a unique perspective and represent a vital source of information about the training programs, the department, etc.

Current students have questions about professional development, licensure, employment outlook, etc. (post-graduation issues).

Purposes of the Project:

To develop an instrument to formally assess student learning in the training programs of the Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology (CECP) by surveying Department graduates.

To conduct and document findings of formal follow-up of graduates to assess graduate perceptions and evaluations of major aspects of the program in an effort to inform current training objectives and practices.

To focus on the specific content area of group work training.

Department Information

- Department Mission:

  To develop competent, ethical, and culturally sensitive professionals for counseling and human resources development roles through graduate education and scholarship

- Graduate only department
- Approximately 700 Master's students (full and part time)
- Several training locations (WMU campuses):

  Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Battle Creek and Traverse City

- Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (CCPS) - Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids

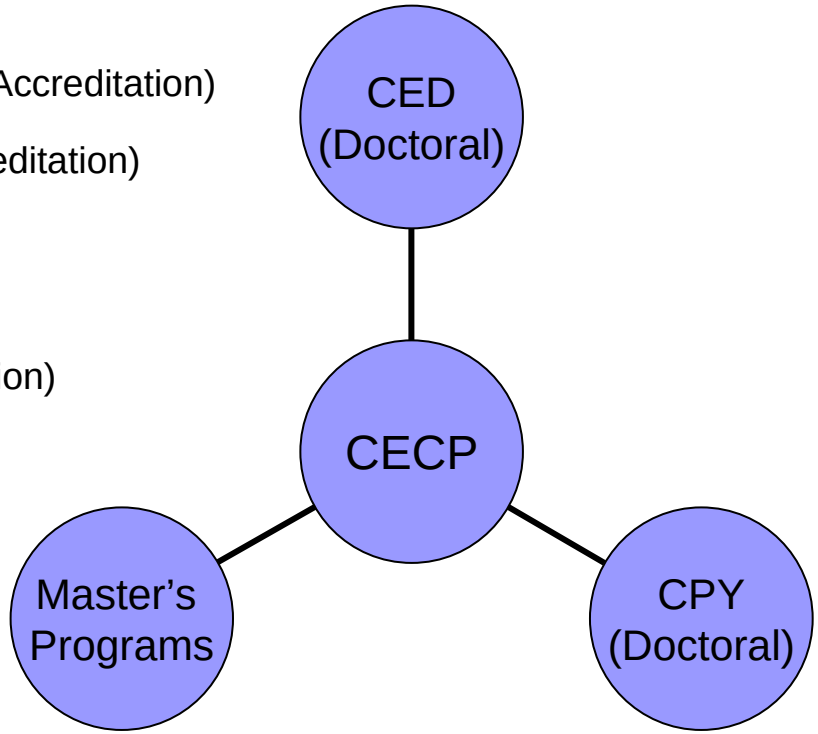
  A service, training, and research component of the Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology, which provides practical training opportunities for graduate students by offering mental health services to residents of southwestern Michigan.

Accreditations

CACREP	Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
APA	American Psychological Association
CORE	Council on Rehabilitation Education

Department Structure

- 2 Doctoral Programs
  - Counselor Education (CED) (CACREP Accreditation)
  - Counseling Psychology (CPY) (APA Accreditation)



- 8 Master's Programs

  Counselor Education: (CACREP Accreditation)
    - Community Counseling
    - School Counseling
    - College Counseling
  - Counseling Psychology
  - Human Resources Development
  - Marriage and Family Therapy
  - Rehabilitation Counseling and Teaching (CORE Accreditation)
  - Administration of College Student Affairs

Other Current Assessment Initiatives

- Field Supervisors complete a survey about the skills and professional development of Master's level interns (current students)
- Employers of Master's graduates provide feedback via a survey about the skills and professional development of employees
- Doctoral students (current and graduates) complete a survey about their training program (CED and CPY) - provide feedback about their experiences and components of trainin

Potential Benefits of the Project/Outcomes

- Overall this project seeks to contribute to the Department's Assessment plan and accreditation guidelines by providing additional information about core curriculum issues and the specific area of group work practice
- The findings will contribute to evaluations and reports to accrediting bodies (e.g., CACREP)
- Will provide feedback about training components and experiences and may be used for ongoing departmental training and enhancement
- The findings may also be used by the Departmental Coordinator of the Master's programs, as well as by faculty who may seek to enhance delivery of services with feedback about specific aspects of courses they teach

Potential Benefits of the Project/Outcomes (con't)

- Aid in student advising
- The focus of the project reflects and reinforces the University's mission as a student-centered research institution
- The feedback about actual group work practice needs will inform content and process of existing courses, as well as contribute to new course development
- Can learn more about University colleagues and resources

What I am learning from the process

- Process may identify more questions than answers initially and reveal other areas in need of assessment; note them and go back to them -- need to prioritize, can't do everything
- About identifying those individuals/departments who can assist you -- provide information
- Importance of having others to talk with about the work (e.g., Fellows Team) – gain support, as a resource, opportunity to explore ideas and get feedback
- Becoming aware of what I/We (Department) already do and what we do well – confirming strengths
- We've gone through several versions of the survey -- always more that you'd want to include (consider future projects)
- Budget – items I left out
- How assessment fits with the University and College mission and initiatives

Recommendations (Things to think about)

- Develop a timeline and set regular meetings to stay on track
- Importance of focusing your plan -- concrete and attainable
- Leave time for thinking, conceptualizing, soliciting input from target group(s) and/or consumers of output - revisions to survey and piloting it
- Resources (budget) – walk through it, you'll still miss something
- Identify ways in which your project can be supported by and inform other assessment initiatives and team(s) within your Department/Program (e.g., Academic Program and Planning Report)

Recommendations (Things to think about)

- Elicit support and input from individuals who have a stake in the outcome
- Include students in the process – learning experience for them, mentoring opportunity for faculty
- Identify how you'll use the information and who will have access
- Consider HSIRB approval (potential professional presentation and/or publication opportunities)