



Innovative Culturally Informed Methods for Providing Practicum Experiences through the Pandemic

Darla Scott, Ph.D., Jennifer West, Ph.D., Kimberly Daniel, Ph.D.

Adrienne Bills, B.S. & Sydni Love, B.S.

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Abstract

The Bowie State University (BSU) School Psychology program prepares candidates to become competent and culturally responsive school psychology practitioners and program evaluators. Based on anticipated changes in how P-12 schools will operate for the foreseeable future, our BOLD project enhanced those field opportunities by providing our candidates with exposure to working with P-12 students and parents in their home setting through an online platform.

Introduction

School Psychology faculty members developed the BSU Building Online Learning Disciplines (BOLD) to meet a practical need within our academic program to provide our pre-service field-based candidates with additional opportunities to engage school aged students online.

Methodology

Participants:

- Six graduate students served as trainers for the BSU BOLD student component. All participants were female students enrolled in the BSU school psychology program.

Materials:

- The focus group protocol consisted of 11 questions centered on administrative structure, skill development or professional growth, curriculum development challenges, perceived successes, challenges or hurdles, recruitment and external or contextual roadblocks.

Procedures:

- The students were divided into two focus groups (1st year and 2nd year).
- The graduate students took part in focus group sessions via Zoom which were held approximately an hour and a half on June 7th, 2021, and June 14th, 2021.
- Both focus group sessions were led by an internal evaluator and framed by the focus group protocol.
- At the conclusion of the focus group sessions, participants were thanked for their candid feedback.

Results

- Practicum students learned how to respond to student learning behaviors and parent concerns within the lessons
- Differentiation skills were developed in trying to reach students at different academic levels in the counseling session activities and lessons
- Practicum students were able to build rapport with the school aged students through the social emotional learning (SEL) lessons
- Practicum students noted a greater sense of trust and vulnerability among the student participants.

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For more information, please contact Dr. Scott at dmscott@bowiestate.edu