Issues in the Online Training of Masters Students in Counseling: Lessons from Teaching a Counseling Skills Course

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Abstract: This Best Practices session described multiple instructional and technological methods used to design and implement a graduate level online course in counseling skills. A challenge for the online counseling instructor is to provide opportunities for counseling students to both collaborate with fellow students, and demonstrate a proficient level of counseling skills. This session outlined one approach to overcoming these obstacles including the use of Discussion Board posts, group papers responding to an assigned book, webcam meetings with the professor, role play activities and student evaluation of those role plays. Each assignment is designed to hone the students’ counseling skills and to encourage collaboration and engagement with other students and the professor. The presenter explained and demonstrated the use of Adobe ConnectPro, Discussion Boards, and Group Wikis in the delivery of an online counseling skills course. Student reactions and future plans for honing the course were also discussed.