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I, Jill Gomez, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Counselor Education.

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Abstract

There is minimal consensus on the pedagogy of teaching interpersonal skills to undergraduate students entering the helping professions. This is problematic as many bachelor-level social workers and addiction counseling students have not consistently been taught interpersonal helping skills, yet many will enter the workforce post program completion. For those programs that have transitioned to online, the question arises as to whether students can meet the learning objectives of skill-training in an online environment. The study examined students’ mastery of content knowledge of students and their helping skills based on Carkhuff's' ratings of skills. Another research goal is to process my teaching experience as the instructor who developed and taught the online course. This study used a mixed-method that utilizes pre- and post-test design and action research. The t-test of pre and post scores on knowledge and skills showed that there were significant differences on students’ skills. The results from the action research data sources suggest that helping skills can be developed in an online environment when instruction includes a dynamic learning environment including sessions with modeling, practice, and feedback. This study informs practitioners about the challenges with transferring skill-based material to an online format and the technology challenges that must be managed to facilitate learning in this new environment.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background "My Story"

While working at a non-profit organization as a social service administrator, I was asked by a former teacher, who still taught at the local community college, if I would be interested in teaching a Communication for Professional Services Class at the two-year college I had once attended. Because I had climbed the corporate ladder and experienced what others may perceive as significant success in my profession, I pounced on this opportunity without giving the decision much thought. I had always aspired to be a teacher; however, life circumstances diverted me to the helping profession, which is until this opportunity presented itself. The class I was being asked to teach is one of the few skill-based courses taught in the associate-level social work and human service program. In using the term skill-based, I am describing the process of demonstrating a specific skill or competency that is necessary for persons entering the helping profession such as social work, counseling, medical assisting etc. The curriculum for an associate of arts is filled primarily with general education requirements such as English, statistics, and psychology.

Because I had taken this course and I was familiar with the content, I assumed it would be quite simple to teach. After all, I had successfully completed the course twelve years earlier and was well versed in its purpose. I was familiar with the material and the manner in which the course was taught. I prepared my syllabus and other course material that I believed would assist the students in understanding the course content. This included lecture material, power point presentations, workbook exercises and practice sessions outlined by Dr. Robert Carkhuff,
author of the textbook, *The Art of Helping* (Carkhuff, 2010), which was the same textbook, though a more current edition, that had been used twelve years earlier. As I reflect back on my initial teaching experience, I realize that I believed that because of the familiarity of the course content and material, I did not fully understand or appreciate the pedagogy. Although I accomplished my initial goal of successfully teaching the course, I realized the course lacked depth, but I had no clear explanation for what was missing. I taught the course, and students completed the material, but those students did not seem to develop skills that were transferrable to their chosen profession. There was a part of me that was energized because I *taught a college level course*, but there was another side of me that felt extremely unsettled. My internal thought process was conflicted.

**Questioning Myself**

Over the next two years, I continued to teach this course adding in various exercises and assignments with the hope of making the experience more relevant and skills-based. The course was beginning to improve as evidenced by the students’ demonstration of the skills, but I continued to struggle with the lack of depth and substance. There was something missing, but I just could not put my finger on what that piece was. Although I was an adjunct professor who was highly skilled in the behavioral health field, and I was discovering that my professional skills were not necessarily transferrable to teaching effectively in the classroom. I think it is important for me to disclose some personally relevant information about this course that I enrolled in twenty years earlier.
Back in Time

When I returned to school in the early 1990s, there were a plethora of twenty-five-year-old moms returning to college who seemed to own the world. These moms had their children, marriages, homes, and had overcome many challenges such as abusive relationships and addiction to any number of substances. I was returning to college after six years of active duty in the U.S. Navy; during which time, I gave birth to a beautiful son and daughter. Although this was a busy time in my life, I accepted a position with the University of Arizona to facilitate early intervention classes for military personnel who had an alcohol related incident. When young men and women in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps were convicted of this type of offense, the commanding officer often required that the sailor or soldier complete a course that focused on personal responsibility and substance abuse prevention. As a result of this job and training opportunities it afforded, I felt called to serve others, and I soon came to understand my calling or purpose for serving. The only thing standing in my way was this thing called licensure, and this required a college degree.

Unlike high school, college courses were much more engaging. After a few quarters of foundational courses, I enrolled in a course that taught interpersonal communication skills. I believed I would do well in this course because of my training with the University of Arizona and my work as a case manager. However, the course material felt artificial and far removed from my prior learning experience. I think my knowledge and skills were well beyond the level being taught. Other students began to complain about the instructor (who was a licensed practitioner) and discount her teaching and instruction.
One woman in particular stood out. She was vocal in class and often challenged the instructor. On breaks, my classmate continually complained about the instructor and formally appealed her grade because it was the only B she received in college. After the long appeal process, the grade was upheld, but I never forgot about the impact this unhappy student had on the class as a whole.

My reason for sharing this story was that I went into the classroom thinking the class I was going to teach would be a simple course to teach, but in the back of my mind, I understood the potential dissatisfaction from students who may already be working in the helping profession. I quickly recognized that I did not fully understand the complex process of teaching interpersonal communication skills, yet somehow believed I could facilitate the development of these helping skills. I grappled with breaking down something that was so intuitive for me, and I assumed, for others. Looking back on this experience I came to appreciate the challenges with teaching foundational skills. I often use the analogy that teaching foundational skills for me was like teaching a five-year-old how to dribble a basketball and complete a layup from a teacher who plays in the NBA. The challenges I experienced in teaching skills-based courses may be one reason why I did not receive any other skills-based courses as a student throughout my college experience until I entered my doctoral program.

Personal Discovery

In the third or fourth year of teaching the Communication for Professional Services class, I revisited the publisher’s training manual with steps to achieve each learning objective. Coincidently, I attended a professional workshop on Motivational Interviewing (MI), an evidenced-based practice that focuses on engagement and retention by using specific skills in
working with individuals who may be resistant to change. As part of this training, I was required to submit a recorded counseling session. Once my recorded session was submitted, I needed to evaluate another participant’s recorded session using the information learned from a prior training sessions. As I was participating in this training exercise, I began to understand the missing components for the course I had been teaching. As I reviewed his and my own recording, I experienced clarity for the development of the MI skills that I was learning in this training. As a result of moving back into the learner role, I was able to develop an appreciation for the dynamic nature of developing this type of professional competency. I experienced clarity for the deliberate skillfulness needed in each helper response during the MI training. This multi-dimensional experience engages several cognitive processes, and I needed to peel these apart for the students just like these trainers were peeling them apart for me and the other trainees. This process was not only necessary for me to learn MI, but also necessary for me to understand and observe so I could teach my students in the manner these instructors were teaching me.

Dr. Carkhuff (2000) writes in his book, "If you need to understand an animal's frame of reference, then get on your hands and knees and view the world the way an animal does" (p. 57). By becoming a student again, I developed an appreciation for the material taught in my course, the purpose and relevance of why we practice the skills and the purpose for recording sessions for review. This is how students demonstrate competency and knowledge in the area they are to become proficient in. The terminology “competency-based training” is used in behavioral health, but many individuals fail to move beyond the cognitive processes and consider the skillfulness in the behavior. Had I not moved out of the teacher role and into a
learner role, I may not have overcome this hurdle. More importantly, I came to understand that if I did not value these interpersonal skills and internalize them as part of my practice, I would never be successful at teaching this course in the manner Robert Carkhuff had intended.

The skills that are developed in this Communication for Professional Services course are about so much more than attending and responding. They support a foundation in which we communicate respect and compassion toward others. They are about being present in the moment as another individual is sharing his or her experience. Hoge, Huey and O’Connell (2004) have outlined best practices in behavioral health training, and they emphasize the importance of routinely updating curricula that are reflective of the knowledge, skills and values of the profession. I have genuinely under-emphasized the practice of being present in the moment as a specific skill necessary for helping others. I made some assumptions early on in my teaching that were inaccurate. As an experienced practitioner and professional helper, I believed these skills were innate, and I lacked an appreciation for the development of skills such as mindfulness, listening, and reflecting. As my appreciation for this type of modeling evolved, I found the course material and practice sessions click just like the addition of the final piece of a puzzle.

As a result of my educational experience, family background, and cultural experience, I was under the assumption that teachers brought with them a certain amount of knowledge. This knowledge was then transferred through lectures and presentations to students. Students then were holders of this information, and teachers could hold them accountable for the information that had been shared. Needless to say, my simplistic interpretation and static teaching experience was the impetus for my early struggles with teaching. As I developed an
appreciation for constructivist perspectives, I soon recognized and came to believe that learning is an interactive process on both the teacher’s and learner’s parts, of how one constructs knowledge as opposed to acquiring knowledge (Herie, 2005). This practice of being reflective in my teaching aligns with the very skills helping professionals must embrace in practice as well as educators to continually grow and evolve in our disciplines. As a practitioner, the practice of critical inquiry is the framework and practice that informs this study.

**Statement of the Problem**

Seven years ago my students began asking me why my syllabi were not on Blackboard. I informed them that I was an adjunct instructor and that I was not that familiar with blackboard. To be quite honest my understanding of Blackboard was limited to the antiquated chalkboard hanging on the front wall of the classroom. I thought my role was to teach students how to become counselors and social workers, not to be concerned with the latest technology. Behavioral health was pretty far removed from the digital world, and I was equally removed. There was minimal emphasis by the behavioral health industry on integrating technology into the classroom. The focus in behavioral health was on producing licensed practitioners.

Fast-forward two years to when I was hired as a full-time, tenured track faculty member. In the back of my mind was this question one of my students had inquired about, "Is your syllabus on Blackboard?" I thought that it would be important for me to learn how to upload my syllabus, but first I needed to understand this thing referred to as Blackboard!

Mentally, I classified Blackboard as one of those areas that I genuinely believed I should be familiar with, but when others began explaining it to me, my mind tuned out. This occurred
because my understanding and interest in technology was non-existent. I used technology in the simplest manner, and I found “complex” tasks involving the computer to be torturous. Thus I avoided these “complex” tasks at all costs. However, this nagging voice in the back of my head told me I could no longer put this off.

Online learning has exploded, but Counseling and Social Work programs have been slow to embrace this medium. According to the Allen and Seaman (2008), over 3.9 million students were taking at least one online course during the fall 2007 term. This represents a twelve percent increase over the number reported the previous year. This technology push seemed to be everywhere within the university. One of the programs I transferred students to was no longer going to be offered as a distance-learning program. It would be taught as an online program. The distance-learning program was taught from a central location and broadcasted to several partnering campuses. Students were meeting the instructor in “real time” and able to engage in dialogue with classmates. However the instructor was physically present in only one location. I remember my initial feeling when I heard this news. I felt concern as to whether or not the students would acquire the necessary skills to be able to work with addicted individuals. Counselors needed skills to work with individuals, families and communities. These were dynamic skills that required developing relationships that are multidimensional. Group counseling skills were even more challenging to acquire, and I could not envision how this would take place in an online course.

What would this mean for the students who were taking these courses, the employers who would hire these students, or the clients who would be served by these counselors? Regan (2008) completed an extensive literature review regarding trends in teaching helping skills
through web-based environments. Her review identifies four important themes to consider as we teach skill based courses online. One of the themes ties specifically into this apprehension of mine regarding teaching skills online and that has to do with the lack of a “coherent body of knowledge to support the teaching of clinical skills in a web-based learning environment” (p.108). As I pondered this internal conflict, I soon understood the focus for my research.

Interpersonal communication skills are the foundation for many professional relationships. Because we begin communicating early in life, many assume that listening and responding effectively evolve naturally, over time. When students are asked why they chose to study the helping profession, they often comment that their friends tell them they should go into the field because they had helped these friends work through a problem. Quite often, these students are ill-prepared to further develop their communication skills and underestimate this skill component of the helping profession. Developing high-level interpersonal communication skills is what sets the layperson apart from the professional. Assisting students in developing these professional skills is challenging but rewarding.

Basic skill-acquisition is necessary during undergraduate coursework so students may benefit from their practicum experience. In a study by Kelly (2007) on the effects of communication skills for undergraduate medical students, she concludes, among other findings, “that the effects of communication skills teaching persist over time” (p. 2). This is supported through the research on clinical training where it was determined that micro-counseling skill training is a solid introductory program for beginning counselors (Uhleman, Stone, Evans, & Hearn, 1982). These two studies suggest it is beneficial for undergraduate-level training for interpersonal communication skills; however, this is rarely the case.
Whiston and Coker (2000) offer a compelling argument in their article titled, Reconstructing Clinical Training: Implications from Research,” regarding the importance of developing undergraduate skill-based training. This article outlines the counseling professions’ pedagogy specifically related to clinical skills. The authors highlight an important research study by Orlinsky, Gawe, and Parks (1994) indicating the therapist’s skillfulness to be positively correlated with successful outcomes. This may seem obvious, and if so, I think it is important to remember that most counseling programs do not begin until graduate school. The breakdown of skillfulness according to Whiston and Coker (2000) includes; a) technical skills, b) therapeutic approaches and interventions, and c) counselor cognitive skill development. As most professional level programs can attest, this level of skill development is both complex and lengthy in its development.

There is minimal consensus on the pedagogy of teaching interpersonal skills to undergraduate students entering the helping professions. This is problematic as many bachelor-level social workers and addiction counseling students have not consistently been taught interpersonal helping skills, yet many will enter the workforce post program completion. For those programs that have transitioned online the question arises as to whether the practice-base courses meet the rigor needed to develop helper skillfulness needed to assist persons served.

This is the crux of this research: the challenge of teaching and assessing interpersonal skills. As a clinical supervisor, I am often surprised by the lack of skills counselors and social workers utilize in the helping relationship. I would sit in on group sessions and reflect on how the counselor seemed to rely on educating the group. By this, I mean they would offer a lecture
about the disease concept of addiction. Many of the group members had heard these lectures in prior group sessions. I would ask the counselor about particular statements made by group members while I observed the group. Often the counselor seemed aware of the statement but did not use the group to process the meaning or relevance of the statement(s) by the group members. In my follow up discussion with the group facilitator, who is a licensed practitioner, I would question his/her understanding of the aforementioned group, and the counselor could express his/her understanding of the dynamics and what they understood the client to be experiencing, but they were unable to demonstrate the skills necessary in vivo to assist the individual in processing the experience. My witnessing of this type of interchange leads me to support Whiston and Cokers’ recommendations related to clinical skills.

Research Goals

The primary goal of this study is to investigate the teaching effectiveness and learning experience for students enrolled in an undergraduate online communication-skill based course where the learning outcomes are focused on the acquisition of interpersonal communication skills. Specifically, the first goal is to examine the mastery of content knowledge of students enrolled in online classes. The second goal is to assess students’ helping skill level based on Carkhuffs’ ratings of skills. The third and final research goal is to process my teaching experience as the instructor who developed and taught the online course.

Research Questions

Using Carkhuff’s model of Human Resources Training (HRT) with undergraduate students:

- Will there be a difference between the pre and post test scores on knowledge of helping skills among undergraduate students in an online class?
- Will there be a pre and post difference for levels of helping skills for undergraduate students in an online class?
- What are the lessons learned for teaching an online skill development course to undergraduate students?

**Significance**

As the demand for online courses continues to increase and the ability to deliver online content continues to improve, the learning environment is ripe for developing or advancing theories to support online skill development. On the other hand, this study may be helpful in supporting the faculty members who believe only content based or non-interactional courses should be taught in the online environment. Regardless of the outcome, this study will contribute to the literature that informs teaching and learning interpersonal skills using web-based tools.

Because undergraduate skill development is not prescribed by accrediting bodies, there has been very little attention paid to the theoretical aspects of undergraduate skill development. This study hopes to re-awaken the passion for undergraduate students to develop skills as well as knowledge and use the research-based trainings that exist to inform pedagogy in all learning environments.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

To date, very little has been written about undergraduate training for interpersonal or foundational helping skills. According to Duffy, Gordon, Whelan, Cole-Kelly, and Frankel (2004) interpersonal helping skills are inherently relational and process-oriented. These skills include: (1) attending behavior that includes respect, listening, and openness; (2) preparing oneself for the interaction; and (3) responding to the content, feeling and meaning (accurate empathy) (Carkhuff, 1969). It is understood in the helping professions that interpersonal helping skills are the foundational skills needed to engage clients in the helping relationship, yet despite the significance of these skills, they are not consistently taught at the undergraduate level, and when they are taught there is minimal agreement on the most effective methods for teaching these skills.

In addition to drawing upon my own experience in the classroom as both a teacher and a learner, the primary areas explored in this chapter include, teaching theory, learning theory, adult learners, online learning, and action research.

Teaching Interpersonal Skills

Bloom’s Taxonomy of learning provided a solid foundation in understanding my teaching role in the classroom. As I absorbed the information outlined in each domain, my previous role as a clinical practitioner was slowly unraveled from my teaching role. Just as I had needed to have clinical counseling skills, I realized that I also needed to have teaching skills. Although there was some overlap in the skills needed for these two disciplines, the knowledge and the ability to discern when to use specific skills needed to be developed.
Bloom (1956) outlines three domains for learning that have varying titles but are often referred to as (a) knowledge, (b) skills, and (c) attitude. The domain most often referenced in teaching is the cognitive domain. Within the cognitive domain there are levels of learning that range on a continuum from knowledge (recalling data), comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis to evaluation with each level demonstrating a higher cognitive process. As students master these less challenging levels, it is then expected that with instruction, they will be successful in mastering the higher level cognitive process.

As I developed an understanding of Bloom's levels of cognitive process, it became clear that students in the Communication Skills for Professional Service course needed to apply and analyze the knowledge and develop skills they were learning about in order to achieve the learning goals for this class. As I gained an appreciation of these distinct objectives, I realized I then needed to understand how to develop this higher level of cognitive learning in the classroom. Social learning theory provided me with the framework to conceptualize this higher level of learning for students.

Although many theorists have their roots in Social Learning Theory (SLT), it is Albert Bandura whose name is most recognizable from a counseling perspective. Bandura was instrumental in shifting the focus of learning from primarily an observational experience to acknowledging the cognitive process (meaning making) that takes place during and after the observation (Gibson, 2004). Hence this made for a shift in his SLT to be identified as social cognitive theory.

Observational learning is critical in developing the higher level learning as discussed in Bloom's taxonomy. Bandura (1977) believes that individuals could learn by observing others and then make sense of what they have observed through this cognitive process. In counseling
and social work we use a technique called modeling. We model skills for individuals so they can observe and understand the concepts and actions that support a new behavior or desired skill. According to Mumm (2006), modeling is the opportunity for students to observe the professional in vivo utilizing the skills in a real or simulated situation.

Bandura (1977, 1986) further identifies the necessary components that must be present in order for an observational learning experience to take place (Gibson, 2004). The first component is attention. The receiver must attend to the behavior that is being modeled. Attending generally involves listening, observing and suspending judgment. The second component is retention. The observer must remember the behavior that was modeled. The third component is behavior production. The observers must be successful in translating what was observed into their own behavior. The fourth component is motivation. The observer must want to develop the new behavior and be willing to pay attention and translate the observed behavior into something he or she is successful at implementing.

**Adult Learners**

Social Learning/Social Cognitive Theory is instrumental in developing skills for individuals entering the helping professions. Gibson's (2004) discussion regarding SLT/SCT and the implications for HRD training explicitly discusses the adult learner and emphasizes the important processes necessary for modeling and skill acquisition. Because learning is rooted in the social context and is a function of the interaction of the person and the environment, (Gibson, 2004), the relevancy of the vicarious experience becomes the basis of self-evaluation. This self-evaluation is based on the learning process that took place through the imitation of the observed behavior. Although we tend to think of children when we discuss imitating
behaviors, the applicability to adults is equally relevant and necessary. In new learning situations adults often have the cognitive framework and understand concepts, and once the modeling of the new behavior is offered, this synthesis of information assists in the transformation of learning.

I also must briefly mention the theory or concept referred to as andragogy. Malcolm Knowles (1980) offers an important contribution in differentiating mature learners from young or less mature learners. Knowles' theory offers assumptions that guide and support pedagogy for adult/mature learners that accepts their life experiences as part of what brings them into the learning environment. According to Knowles (1980), the following instructor characteristics are important when developing courses that involve adult learners:

1. An appreciation of the role of learner's life experience;
2. The ability to optimize learning when readiness to learn in adulthood is increasingly based on real-life needs and situations;
3. The shift from learning for future application toward learning to address immediate needs;
4. The shift from intrinsic motivators become increasingly more important than extrinsic ones; and
5. The ability for the instructor to demonstrate both competencies in their profession as well as enthusiasm for their profession.

These assumptions support the dynamic, multidimensional experience that takes place when students are learning interpersonal communication skills. Students do not want to discount their life experience for textbook learning. This constructivist-androgenic view of adult learners
supports transforming and applying knowledge over lectures and taking notes. Students want to use life experience as part of their learning and allow others to benefit from their experiences. These life experiences are often what motivated the student to return to the classroom. For many learners they return despite a less than favorable experience the first time through the educational system. Finally, students are motivated, and this ties into the fourth component of SLT. The teacher must harness this motivation by linking it to the optimism and readiness of the learner to develop the skills needed to become professional helpers. In the next few sections I will attempt to highlight the literature that supports models for teaching interpersonal communication skills.

**Teaching Micro Skills**

Both Social Work and Counseling disciplines emphasize skill-based training at the graduate level. Delaying this type of course until graduate school is problematic for two primary reasons. The first reason is because students do not receive the opportunity to develop the skills necessary for the profession. In a study by Kelly (2007), the research indicates that communication courses are most effective for undergraduate students when they are longitudinal and coincide with internship. The longer students are exposed to the development of the skills, the more likely they will become competent in the use of the skills.

The second reason that the delay of skill training until graduate school is problematic was discussed briefly in Chapter 1. Many undergraduate students begin working in entry level positions well before they begin graduate school. According to the College Degree Report (collegedegreeerreport.com), 30.5% of those social workers providing behavioral health services have completed Bachelors level courses. Another study by Teare and Sheafor (1995) found that
over 90% of Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) students enter into direct service positions upon graduation. Most state licensure boards allow for certification of addiction counselors well before graduate level of training. Many of these direct service providers may lack the skills needed to engage clients in the helping relationship. This gap in practice skills is well documented in a 2004 article by Hoge, Huey, and O'Connell published in the Administration and Policy in Mental Health Journal. This publication documents the widening gap between classroom training practices and the practical skills needed in the behavioral health field. The gap has been intensified by the rapidly changing influences on behavioral health such as managed care, evidenced-based practice and consumerism. The authors suggest the gap is becoming so great it is "crippling the field." As the counseling and social work professions continue to evolve through research supporting effective treatment strategies, the importance for higher education to consistently teach foundational skill becomes clearer as a mechanism to mediate this widening gap.

**Practice Skills in Social Work**

Not only is there minimal skill based training in undergraduate social work programs, but there is also little to no consensus on the most effective model for teaching foundational interpersonal skills. The social work curriculum prepares BSW graduates for generalist practice through a mastery of core competencies. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) states "competencies are measurable practice behaviors that are comprised of knowledge, values and skills" (CSWE, 2008). Accreditation standards are guidelines and, unfortunately, offer little clarity on overall expectations or outcomes for students. With this lack of clarity, programs may fail to assure pedagogy that includes best practices for skill development. In the CSWE
standards the Educational Policy 2.1.10(a) address the issue of engagement, by stating "social
workers should use empathy and other interpersonal skills." However, there is no agreed upon
method for teaching or assessing this competency. Kelly (2007) discusses this by writing about
the challenges with teaching communication when the course instructor had not formally been
taught the interpersonal communication skills.

teach students practice skills. As part of this research Mumm reviews the limited amount of
published information on teaching practice skills. She divides the research into four categories
in an attempt to contextualize the few published studies. The results of her meta-analysis
indicate that students learn best by actually practicing the skills and having the skills
demonstrated for them. Mumm also concluded that students learn least by lecture and
discussion or traditional teaching methods. Mumm's research goes on to point out that field
instructors continue to teach practice skills first with discussion and written material, the
method that is least helpful in teaching practice skills. This default practice of teaching may
very well be contributing to the gap in training and practice skills that I previously discussed.

The counseling literature suggests a rich history of empirical research to support the
effectiveness of helping skills training programs. Research in Counseling and Psychology during
the 1960s and 1970s continually evolved in an effort to understand the most effective ways to
teach students helping skills and which methods/models should be utilized. The research was
relatively consistent and the results of the studies offer guidelines for counselor educators that
continue to be utilized today. The training models most consistently reviewed included (1)
micro-counseling developed by Ivey (1970); (2) Human Resource Training (HRT) developed by
Carkhuff (1969); and (3) Interpersonal Process Recall developed by Kegan (1984). Baker et al. (1990) conducted a meta-analysis and a narrative analysis of three major training programs for communication skills. The results of this study indicate that all three models are effective in counselor training, but the first two were more effective. In calling the models “effective” the study suggests that the training is both valid and useful in improving the skill attainment and decreasing unhelpful behaviors. In addition, Duys and Hedstrom (2000) completed a study that focused more on cognitive complexity and counselor development rather than researching skill development. The findings in this study recommend that skill-based training be provided early in the counselor education curriculum to provide the groundwork for more complex levels of case conceptualization later in the coursework. One final study that assists in providing guidance on skill development in counselor education indicates that the HRT training is more effective in developing entry level skills (attending, listening, etc.) and the micro-skills training is more effective in developing higher level skills (confrontation, self-disclosure, etc.) (Crews et al., 2005).

In an extensive study by Clara E. Hill and Robert W. Lent (2006), the issue of the best training strategies for teaching helping skills was revisited. In this publication the authors’ goal is to, "revisit the helping skills literature, evaluating what is known about helping skills training and what remains unknown" (p. 155). The goal is to stimulate new research focusing on these foundational helping skills by understanding the literature from a "fresh perspective" (Hill & Lent, 2006). The results of the Hill and Lent (2006) research supported the previous results regarding training models stating that the HRT and MST programs promote skill acquisition. Additionally, the study does offer clarity and confirmation regarding the effectiveness of the
specific teaching methods. According to Hill and Lent (2006) and consistent with other studies’ findings, modeling and feedback are the most effective method of instruction for teaching trainees skills. Modeling is defined as the demonstration of appropriate ways to perform the identified skill (Hill & Lent, 2006). This study concluded that modeling outperformed instruction and feedback, and multi-method training outperformed single-method training. These results support Mumm's (2006) meta-analysis conclusion that instruction only of practice skills is the least helpful method of training. Coincidentally, similar results were previously reported in a 1978 study by Teevan and Gabel. This study investigated experiential teaching methods over traditional methods in teaching college student mental health paraprofessionals. The results were clear in that modeling and role-playing techniques were more promising than lecture-discussion teaching methods.

Assessing student responses in a helping situation can appear subjective and without merit. How can one person understand the helpfulness or lack thereof regarding another person's response? Dr. Carkhuff (1969) acknowledges the limitations surrounding the rating scales. He writes:

_The Criterion of Meaning_

_The creative development of theoretical constructs and the operationalization of these constructs is, in a very real sense, a by-product of the commitment of the creative clinician to the welfare of his clients. By and large, then, the helping dimensions and scales reflect the dispositions of their creators. Indeed, in their eager efforts to develop more consistently effective ways of helping people the promulgators may view the dimensions discerned as “artificial dissections of more natural, effective human processes, which are known to us now only intermittently in our experience” (Carkhuff, 1968b). In addition, while grounded in human experience, the constructs are not merely exhaustive enough to account for the totality of human experience. While other variables are potential contributors, most truly facilitative processes may remain unknown to us; only the creative clinician can venture into the remaining unknown without hurting others or himself to discover benefits for others and himself. (p. 228)_
Carkhuff goes on to discuss the limitations of the scale and acknowledges they are neither finite nor precise measures. He emphasizes the need for developing validity in outcome indexes and having similar measures of similar constructs to allow for empirical research. This may seem to conflict with the constructivist theory I have discussed; however, I genuinely believe there is a place for many types of research to inform my teaching.

**Interpersonal Skills in Other Disciplines**

Not only have the counseling and social work disciplines researched effective teaching/training practices in relation to skill attainment, but other disciplines have embarked on this quest as well. Since the development of formalized training models for teaching students interpersonal helping skills, there have been more than 450 studies that validate their effectiveness in increasing skill acquisition (Kuntze et al., 2007). Teaching, business, and medicine recognize the importance of "the relationship" between student and teacher, customer and agent, patient and physician. The professional meets one’s individualized needs by providing a product or service; however, that will only happen when the professional understands the unique needs of the patient or customer. This understanding takes place through a dynamic process of listening and observing. The Kalamazoo II Report (2004) documents the need for residency and medical education programs to teach and evaluate competencies in interpersonal communication skills. Medical curriculums across the world have come to understand the need for competencies in teaching and assessing behaviors related to gathering a medical history and reporting a diagnosis to the patient. The relationship between the patient and physician evolves because of the trust that comes from interpersonal communication. According to Kelly (2007), improved communication skills can improve patient
satisfaction, symptom resolution and improvements in functional and psychological status.

Kelly’s report also supports prior reports in other disciplines indicating the following:

- Communication skills programmes with a strong experiential component are more effective than programmes that are theory or discussion based solely.
- The quality of the constructive feedback is crucial to the effectiveness of this method; therefore, it is recommended that communication-skills teachers themselves be trained in giving constructive feedback. (p. 2)

The consistent themes throughout the literature identify that modeling, as opposed to instruction, is necessary in developing skills. Interpersonal skills are best taught early on in the curriculum and instructors must demonstrate proficiency in the skills they are teaching.

Despite this clear and consistent message, we do not consistently follow these evidenced-based practices.

**Online Teaching Environment**

My literature review up to this point has focused on teaching and learning in a traditional face-to-face environment. It is important to note that online learning continues to dominate trends in higher education. There were approximately 3.94 million online students enrolled in the fall of 2007 (Allen, 2008). This represents an increase of 12.9% over the previous year. According to the Digest of Educational Statistics, associate’s degree programs teach approximately 37% of the online courses (2007). Although it is difficult to understand exactly which disciplines are dominating these numbers, the Social Science courses are well represented in the mix of online courses being offered in public institutions. Based on the results of my literature searches using the University of Cincinnati’s library search engine,
research related to teaching online students or online classes is substantial. However, their appear to be fewer published studies when focusing on skill development over knowledge content, and even less when searching for research specific to the helping professions.

Faculty members in the helping fields have not consistently embraced online learning. A 2005 national study examining faculty perceptions of the effectiveness of web-based courses suggests that faculty continue to perceive face-to-face courses as more effective than online courses (Moore, 2005). In another study by Siegel, Jennings, Conklin, and Napoletano (2006), faculty members were surveyed and asked about their attitudes toward online learning. The results reflected a tolerance for teaching content-based courses such as policy or history, but there was a clear bias against teaching practice courses online. The two primary areas of concern for the social work educators are 1) they feel it is difficult to teach the practice skills online and 2) they find it difficult to socialize students to the profession. This resistance exists despite substantial research about engagement practices for online learners and how to create an online environment that invites emotion, shared meaning and dialogue.

In a study by Traphagan et al. (2010) the author discusses Tu's (2000) research focusing on online learning and indicates the researchers declared that social presence "is required to enhance and foster online social interaction, which is the major vehicle of social learning" (p. 27). More importantly, teaching presence is necessary so students may experience both a cognitive and social presence as well as achieve higher levels of cognitive processing (Swan & Shih, 2005).

This higher level of cognitive process becomes critical as students are mastering foundational skills that involve cognitive and behavioral steps. Gog, Sluijsmans, Brinke, and Prins (2008),
highlight Van Merrienboer's (1997) Four Component Instructional Design-model as a basis for their research in understanding the dynamic nature of formative assessment in an online environment when developing professional skills. The researchers suggest that well-structured assignments are less complex as compared to ill-structured tasks or assignments that have more than one correct response. The latter assignments are more complex as the learner must consider the options for responding affirmatively. As a result of this cognitive process the learner adapts to new situations in which to apply the particular skill and in turn, if done correctly, has demonstrated the use of that particular skill or set of skills. This research study also highlights the importance for students in an online environment that have the opportunity to develop the skills without initially being cognitively overloaded by more challenging tasks. The student should be able to master certain aspects and gradually integrate the more challenging situations where they would apply the same skills.

This research is important as we consider the capability of developing interpersonal skills in an online environment. First, it addresses the importance of authentic tasks aligned to those one may experience in their particular disciplines. Secondly, it addresses the importance of clarity in evaluating performance involving knowledge and skills. This is essential in developing a workforce of competent, skilled individuals who will self-assess their performance and embrace practices for ongoing improvement. The tension between developing helping skills using structured model verses looser, less structured processes, such as process recordings, co-counseling and lecturing would lean toward the structured model. This study offers direction for those individuals developing online courses that are skill based and less content driven.
The community of inquiry model is discussed in a book authored by Ken Bain (2004) titled, *What the Best College Teacher Do*. Bain highlights the importance of student engagement with faculty, peers and content (social presence). He also describes the cognitive presence by discussing the importance of having a stimulating intellectual experience and authentic tasks that encourage students to think reflexively about prior experiences. The third area Bain discusses is the relationship and intimacy (teaching presence) created through communicating and feedback with students. This ties back to SLT in that most learning takes place in a social context where new skills are modeled by others (Holden & Westfall, 2009). These teaching domains are necessary for teachers in a traditional classroom environment as well as an online environment. If the counseling and social work professions continue to struggle with skill development in an emotionally rich environment such as the face-to-face classroom, what does this mean for counseling and social work programs that are taught entirely online?

Media Richness Theory (MRT) suggests the student learning is improved when the media matches the task (Daft & Lengel, 1986). The media differ in their richness based on ability to offer timely feedback, message personalization, language and communication preferences and social cues (Balaji & Chakabarti, 2010). This includes 1) the availability of feedback; 2) the capacity of the medium to transmit multiple cues; 3) the use of natural language; and 4) the personal focus on the medium. By using this rubric the writers produced the following spectrum of media richness: face-to-face, video, telephone, email, postal letter, note, memo, flier and bulletin. This information is troubling as well as enlightening. It is troubling because the current teaching methods utilize face-to-face and video as a primary medium for teaching and learning, yet the literature previously discussed continues to suggest the workforce lacks
skills. It is equally enlightening for the primary reason that video is becoming easier to integrate in the online classroom.

Today's digital generation experiences and processes information differently than previous generations (Jukes, McCain, & Crockett, 2010). Because of their own experience, teachers often provide information linearly, logically, and sequentially, yet digital learners prefer learning that is relevant, active, instantly useful, and fun (Jukes, McCain, & Crockett, 2010). The constant exposure to digital media has forever changed the interpersonal communication exchange in ways not completely understood. Jukes, McCain, and Crockett (2010) offer a profound summary statement Chapter 2 of their book titled Understanding the Digital Generation, the authors write "because of our own experiences growing up, we have a problem letting go of our past assumptions about teaching and learning" (p.31). The reason I find this so profound is the golden thread that is woven throughout this research. We are likely to teach the way we were taught. We are likely to provide helping skills using models that were modeled for us. We are likely to research others using the same methods without considering alternative options. As I move into discussing the significance of action research in this study, I think it is important to acknowledge the tensions that exist in most of these areas of discussion.

**Action Research**

Kurt Lewin is considered to be one of the founding fathers of action research and coined the term in 1946 (Burke, 2009). Action research is a deliberate process of inquiry with action steps that involve problem formation, data collection, data analysis, reporting of results and action planning. This model of inquiry is not completely foreign to research in social work or counseling although the researcher’s role in the research may be that of an insider. As
practitioners, we strive to make meaning of our practices. Schon (1983) describes reflective practitioners as those who “learn to learn” and strive to make meaning from their teaching. As helping professionals, this is a skill that is utilized and modeled for students. Therefore, this role of insider as researcher allows the classroom to be an environment where both the teacher and students incorporate principles of reflective practice for improving outcomes.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), write in the preface of their book titled, Inquiry as Stance, Practitioner Research for the Next Generation about the deliberate decision to use the word Practitioner over Teacher in the title. Their explanation for this decision is critical for appreciating the overall themes in this research. The first theme is that teaching and learning are dynamic processes that can only be explained and understood if one considers the context in which teaching and learning takes place. Failure to consider the unique experience of participants provides data that only partially explains phenomenon. Teaching implies a hierarchical model as explained by Cross (2005), whereby information is imparted from those who know to those who don’t know. As a practitioner, I must work from the framework of what the student knows and understands, just like the students entering the helping profession must develop skills necessary to understand the persons they will serve professionally.

This practice of practitioner inquiry or practitioner research is the process and the evaluation of one's teaching through a reflective process. Schon (1984) describes a reflective practitioner as one that not only is present and deliberative in his or her practice, but one who places the student or client at the center of the practice and works through the problems in unison with others. Then, he or she is reflective about the process/practice in an effort to improve future opportunities for facilitating problem solving. This practice demonstrates the
core values of action research as described by Brydon-Miller, Greewood, and Maguire (2003), "a respect for people and for the knowledge and experience they bring to the research process, a belief in the ability of democratic processes to achieve positive social change, and a commitment to action" (p.15).

This dynamic practice allows teachers to be learners and learners to be teachers, according to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009). It challenges our assumptions about research from a dominant/outside perspective and suggests and organizes a democratic process that uses teachers as learners and respects the insider researcher as legitimate. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) discuss the four central dimensions of the construct of inquiry are, 1) a perspective on knowledge that rejects the formal-knowledge-practical knowledge dualism; 2) an expanded view of practice as the interplay of teaching, learning, and leading; 3) an understanding of practitioner communities as the primary medium or mechanism for enacting inquiry as stance as a theory of action; and 4) the position that the overarching purpose of practitioner inquiry is to provide education for a more just and democratic society.

The first dimension directly addresses the formal-knowledge practical knowledge dualism. Fenstermacher (1994) states that practical knowledge is bound by the situation or context in which it arises. This description of practical knowledge is critical in understanding the importance of skill development in those entering the helping profession. The counselor or social worker must have the skills to listen, apply theory and assist others within the context of the individual's experience. There is no formula (formal knowledge) that explains how to interpret one's unique experience in this world. As practitioners, we evolve in our ability to understand others' experiences. Carkhuff (1977) references this process in a guide for new
teachers by suggesting, "All learning begins with the learner’s frame of reference" (p. iv). Because this is an automatic process, it is difficult to break this down and explain to others. However, we can get glimpses of an individual’s unique experience by listening and reflecting on what was heard. By listening and reflecting, we begin to enter the person’s frame of reference. This very practice is the heart of the interplay of teaching, learning and leading.

The student learning objectives are outcomes for classroom learning that students should achieve by the end of the course. As the instructor/researcher, my goal is to develop a learning experience where students are both challenged and supported. These goals are not mutually exclusive. As Stringer, Christensen, and Baldwin (2010) explain, teachers and students “engage in a parallel process of inquiry that enables students to accomplish their learning and assist teachers to engage in more effective teaching practices” (p.11). I designed this study to be inclusive of many types of inquiry examining counseling skills not traditionally explored in research. As an action researcher, I understood the results of this study would be less meaningful for me had I not participated in the development, teaching and assessment of the skills in this course. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) offer a meaningful discussion regarding a phrase first introduced by Argyis and Schon (1978) coined "theory of action." In their explanation they state, "Inquiry as stance is grounded in the problems and contexts of practice in the first place and in the ways practitioners collaboratively theorize, study, and act on those problems in the best interests of the learning and life chances of students and their communities" (p.123).

My concern regarding the skill level of graduates as well as questioning the efficacy of online programs regarding skill development has generated my genuine interest in the teaching and
learning of interpersonal helping skills. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) write extensively about tensions between traditional research methods and inquiry as stance (practitioner inquiry). It is my belief that these tensions need to be examined and evaluated for their individual contributions to the questions being raised.

Data triangulation is designed to strengthen a study by collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data in the study. These often polarizing methods can provide similar results that may strengthen the findings of a study. Additionally, practitioner inquiry can inform findings as part of a mixed-methods research design. This research design looks at the problem from a variety of angles to and establishes protocols that strengthen this particular study as opposed to diminishing the credibility of the study. This interdependence is reflective of the tension needed to increase tolerances for more inclusive forms of inquiry.

If I am embracing the practices of circular learning, which means I am reflexive in my though process, versus linear, self-directed verses instructor led, then I too must provide a format that embraces "indigenous knowledge," or knowledge that evolves organically as a result of the culture, institutions and history that shaped my students, without losing the students in the online environment. As a reflective practitioner, I wanted to use a model adapted by the behavioral health field. The Integrative Process Model (IPM) (Kiser, 2012), is a structured reflective model that supports students in fieldwork, and offers a framework for reflective practice. Students process their learning experiences by considering the five steps as outlined in Figure 1. They are asked to look objectively at the situation or experience they are processing. Once they reflect on the objective information, they are guided to consider theory or knowledge that assists them in making meaning of the event they are reviewing. As they
consider the theory, they are encouraged to examine dissonance regarding the situation. Then students are encouraged to consider what they have learned and how they will go forward with this new understanding of self and others. This model is designed to have students work through these challenges with field supervisors to resolve the conflict or learn additional information to assure concordance with the learning environment. The IPM uses a similar process as outlined in the action research steps. The following is an example of this process based on a student reflecting on a practicum experience:

**Part One: Experience**

The experience I would like to address occurred this past week. I was asked to participate and to be part of an introduction to the Nintendo Wii operation. My supervisor (S) wanted to have the session in the back hallway, away from interruption. The persons present were my supervisor, the program director (PD), an activity staff member (ASM), the activity leader (AL), and me. I was asked to participate both as an observer (My supervisor asked me to observe the activity staff person’s reaction towards the Wii) and as a participant for learning how to setup and prepare the system for our customers to use the Wii system. The session was set for early afternoon, which didn’t require either of our attention.

- We started off on a good note. I found out that the ASM has grandkids which have a Wii game; she is scared of not being able to play along with them. That helped for me to get a sense of her overall reaction of introducing it to our customers (just an update, our seniors are referred to as customers). Three of us played a game of bowling and walked us through the setup of the game. The ASM said she has never picked up a bowling ball in her life, I asked if she has ever watched, she said yes, and again was given more information on her perspective. In the first 5 frames, the ASM got 3 strikes! That was the catalyst she needed to show her from personal experience how stimulating this game can be for anyone. She was bouncing off the walls (her excitement, not the bowling balls). By the end of the game, the ASM and I were discussing possible ways to include customers in the customer presentation, possible customers who might be cognitively able to participate, and options. I mentioned that I really like some of the research I had done on the Wii and I would be glad to pass on any information I have. The ASP told me that she would be happy for me to help in any way. My S liked that opening and asked if the ASM would like me as a partner in the presentation of the Wii; she said yes and my S asked for a presentation to the staff at Friday’s morning meeting. The ASP and I were now a TEAM!

**Part Two: Reflection**

- This experience has affected many of my personal values: stability, recognition, self-respect, and joint cooperation. Stability in the desire to have operations work smoothly; recognition in the
hope that my work is considered of value; self-respect for myself, my co-workers, and the customers; and joint cooperation in that we (management & staff) are all on the same page, going in the same direction with the same goal.

- Emotions and thoughts which this experience triggered in me consisted of caution, constraint, and worry over this encounter. With the word from the ASM that she felt I was mad about a comment she had made to me caused these emotions.
- One of my attitudes, biases, or preferences which were brought out with this experience was my wish to “not hurt anyone” with my actions. Social work is a helping environment but can result in people being hurt, though unintentionally, by our actions.

Part Three: Identify Relevant Theory and Knowledge

- Coursework I have had in sociology, psychology, and human Services has taught me about respect, chain of command, and the importance of listening and reflecting on the day’s activities. That information, though encoded in my brain, was not brought into my conscious memory when this situation occurred.
- I have learned to stay alert to those matters concerning team involvement when coming up upon a similar experience.
- Throughout my retail management experience, I have come up against similar situations before. It has been eye opening for me to be able to use experiences from the past to help me recognize what may have happened this time.
- I want to make sure I do not fall into the same predicament as the guy in the chapter with triangulation theory. I have found myself placed between two strong-willed personalities; one in a management position and one in a staff position.

Part Four: Examining Dissonance (Discord)

- I felt discomfort in this situation because, as I explained in class, there was a feeling of a threat to her job security from me in my involvement in daily activities. For those of who were not in class, ASP had brought up a situation which I presented a DVD which I made for presentation in one of her activities. She said she didn’t think it was a good idea. Word got back to my S and she asked me to do it. The next day I saw ASP and she asked if I was mad at her.
- This was the first time at my practicum that I felt uneasy.
- I truly felt that my helping with DVD’s, trivia, and information presented to the customers, were all what I “should do” to help. I never dreamed that it may be construed as a possible threat to current staff.
- I will use this experience to anticipate consequences of my actions, even those which are not apparent to my anticipated reactions.

Part Five: Articulating Learning

- Knowledge and wisdom come in many ways. For me, on this experience, I have learned to look at and analyze the consequences of my actions more carefully. I have become more aware of
the potential consequences of words, looks, or actions toward other staff members and the interpretation of those activities to others.

**Part Six: Applying Experience to Future Learning**

I have proceeded to add a section in my Learning Objectives for asking the Activity Leader about the proper procedure for scheduling, coming to a decision on, and proper follow-up on activities designed for the cognitive levels of our customers.

- I will be more aware of any comments I make to other staff members. I will still have a very open communication with others, but will curtail any comments which might appear as gossip or comments about prior conversations.

**Part Seven: Weekly Supervisor Meeting**

I will be meeting with my S to discuss situations like this (we already have) and my interactions with the staff and customers.

The process involves:

Figure 1. *Integrative Process Model* (Kiser, 2012)
Summary

Despite hesitation by faculty members regarding online skill development, there is some research to support efficacy in online skill development in social work programs (Ouellette, 1998). Clearly, the most effective method for teaching skill development is modeling. With current technology the online environment can support a variety of different pedagogical techniques. In Herie's publication (2005), she references Reeves and Reeves (1997) who "argue that it is not the technology that makes online learning unique, but the pedagogical dimensions that it can be designed to deliver. Thus, online learning can be regarded as more a channel than a container of learning tools" (p. 46). As with many new technologies the initial intent or purpose may be perceived by others as unnecessary. As the technology and usefulness of the technology evolves so does the practicality of its usage. When online teaching began to take roots its fruitfulness was focused on accessibility. As it has evolved, it continues to reach students who previously lacked access, but it has also provided opportunities for learning involving other technologies not previously imagined.

Although there has been a limited amount of research regarding the development of interpersonal communication skills with undergraduate students, there is sufficient research to support the realization that skills based courses are a critical element for those individuals entering the helping professions. There is consistent data to support the need for modeling and feedback in the development of the skills, and because there is extensive research regarding online learning and the demand for online learning is so great, there is an important shift in educational research that embraces practitioner inquiry and the process of discovery for both
teacher as the facilitator and teacher as the learner. I plan to explore this experience as a reflective practitioner using the information from the studies outlined in this chapter.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This study was designed to evaluate whether students enrolled in an online Communication for Professional Services course will develop interpersonal communication knowledge and skills. Additionally, as a reflective practitioner, I have explored my personal experience and discussed my discovery as a researcher and practitioner. In this chapter, I discuss the research design, sample, data sources, data collection and data analysis procedures. This chapter also includes the method for coding of data and the emergence of themes. I have operationally defined terminology used throughout this study and discussed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements. Finally, I discuss the process and method in which I used to reflect upon my teaching.

Preparing for the study

Once I realized my interest in researching online skill development, I was acutely aware of the fact that I understood very little about technology. I had never uploaded a video to YouTube, nor had I converted a file to a format other than a word document. My personal learning curve would be significant. I spent the next two and a half years attending workshops on various technologies used in online learning environments. During this time, I enrolled in a year-long seminar focusing on teaching online and converting the syllabus and content for the new learning environment. These workshops were offered at my branch campus as well as the main campus. I participated in online workshops through Sloan-Consortium, an entity committed to quality online education, simply to experience the various tools and technologies.
being used in the online classroom. During this time I became more confident and knowledgeable with online learning and shared what I learned with my students every step of the way. I quickly integrated information learned in these seminars to online learning opportunities for students, and as my confidence increased, I began teaching hybrid courses. Eventually, I developed an online course for another college, and this provided me an understanding of the pitfalls in online teaching that do not occur in a hybrid environment because the hybrid environment or blended environment offers face-to-face classes as well as online learning. This was an important step in my own learning because I began to understand the commitment of time and energy I needed to make if I were to successfully teach a skills-based course entirely online.

Not only did this first course provide me with an understanding of the students who took online courses, but it also allowed me to experience all those questions and challenges that I could not anticipate. The realization I made is that I needed to become familiar with the basic technology, Blackboard, the learning management system (LMS), as well as the terminology that I had for so long avoided.

As my confidence in using new technology increased, I continued to ponder how the actual listening and responding skills that students needed to demonstrate in this course would be developed. I was acutely aware of the importance of modeling skills for skill development, but I was not sure how I would actually model these skills in an online environment. The only platform that afforded this "real time" or interactive experience was Elluminate. I had experienced Elluminate twice in the learning opportunities I was involved in, and both times the demonstration was a complete disaster. Either the instructors were not proficient at
demonstrating the usefulness of this tool, or the learners did not understand Elluminate’s potential. Either way, I did not understand Elluminate’s capabilities for several months but eventually I found a handful of teachers who spoke positively about their experience and usefulness of this tool in the online classroom.

One instructor enrolled me into her online course, and this allowed me to enter an Elluminate session for the purpose of becoming familiar with this interface. I understood what I wanted to do, but I was not sure that I could accomplish the learning outcomes; however, I was willing to try. As I practiced with her, I began to see Elluminate’s potential and how I might use this medium to practice and model the skills for students. In my traditional face-to-face environment, I offer students information about a particular skill. Then I model the skill for the student by role-playing with another student volunteer. Next I group them to practice the skill. During this learning module I make my way through the classroom and observe students practicing the skills and offer real-time feedback. This would be difficult to imitate in the online format as would be finding a time when students could come together to practice the skills.

Because of the manner in which online courses are described on the web, it can be difficult to have students agree to a specific meeting time. Finklestein (2006) cautions instructors on requiring synchronous formats: "Synchronous learning should be deployed when synchronous learning is uniquely suited. Not adhering to the basic principle can damage learners' trust in an instructor's instructional prerogatives and dampen learner motivation" (p. 5). Asking students to participate in an online class at a specific time that does not require a “real time” format can discourage learners. I understood, as a result of having taught this course for ten years and having my hypothesis confirmed through research, that interpersonal communication skills
need to be experienced in a "real time" format. Two challenges I could anticipate would be finding a time for students to meet and the lack of visual cues to assist in keeping students engaged.

Learning Objectives

An important part of the course redesign seminar, that I participated in through the University of Cincinnati’s Center for Educational Learning, focused on developing learning objectives. We were asked to review our learning objectives to assure they were written in a manner that supported the program outcomes and that they were measureable. This was also useful in developing assessment for the learning outcomes. Dr. Carkhuff had very specific learning objectives for each module. Having this training manual simplified this conversion process. Figure 2 shows an organizer that I developed to describe the learning objective suggested by the author, and in the second column I provided instructions for the students for completing the necessary assignments for accomplishing the learning objective. The following is an example of a weekly learning objective and the corresponding assignment:
Learners will demonstrate observations skills. Differentiating between an observation and an inference

This week we are focusing on observations. You will need to read pp. 59 - 66 in the Art of Helping. Then you should complete exercises 12, 13 and 14 in your workbook. In exercise 14 you will use the 3 video links in this folder to record your observations. Situation 1 is the first video, and there are three singers in this video. Pick one of the 3 singers in the first video to complete this exercise on. Video 2 has one primary speaker as does video 3. You will need to type your observation responses and upload these through this link by Sunday at midnight.

Next you will respond to two of the three discussion boards looking at the low congruence or high congruence between what was being said in the recordings and the manner in which the statements were made. Your original posts should be made by Friday at midnight and respond to at least four others on each forum.

Then you should read the chapter Cultural Differences. This can be found under Course Documents.

You should begin this week’s assignment by listening to my brief recording on the difference between an observation and an inference.

Each weekly assignment has textbook and workbook assignments to assist students in understanding the material. Students are given several video clips and written assignments to demonstrate their understanding of the material.

Writing the learning objectives became an organized method in which I could break down the process of converting the face-to-face course to an online course. The United States Distance Learning Association offers an Instructional Media Selection Guide for Distance Learning (2010). This guide offers an assessment of the strengths of the media delivery options and how to align those with learning objectives. As instructors we tend to become familiar with presentation formats such as lecture, power point or videos. We then rely on this preferred
method of teaching over and over again regardless of the learning objective. This tendency also exists in online teaching. Faculty often place content on the LMS and rely on discussion boards or weekly assignments to assist the student in meeting the learning objective without really considering the most effective method of delivery for that particular learning objective. As my knowledge and use of technology increased, I began to believe in my ability to teach a skill-based course using the Blackboard LMS.

**Carkhuff’s Training Manual**

I used the Carkhuff’s training manual as my guide in preparing weekly assignments. Each section has an objective, lesson plan, resources, series of activities and training tips. The resources were videos, textbook pages that cover the section, and workbook pages. The videos were not used for the online course because they are no longer available. I was able to use previous students’ recordings and some of my own recorded role-plays to demonstrate specific skills. Students were assigned weekly textbook pages to read, as well as workbook pages to complete. Depending on the assignment, I might have students upload the responses to the workbook assignments and in other weeks I asked students to discuss their workbook responses through the discussion board. When the activity as it was described in the training manual, was non-transferable to the online environment, I spent a significant amount of time developing alternative activities to support the objective for each week.

The following example outlines this process: Objective five focuses on attending personally. This is where students practice squaring, leaning forward and making eye-contact with the helpee. The trainer’s manual suggests three activities to achieve the learning objective. The first activity suggests that the instructor ask an open-ended question. Then it suggests the
instructor look away while the student is responding and lean back in his/her chair. In essence, do the opposite of the attending behaviors. Finally, the directions suggest the instructors do the same thing by asking another open-ended question, and this time the instructor should model the suggestions in the textbook by making eye-contact, leaning forward, squaring, and listening to the helpee.

In order to accomplish this task online, I provided links to four helping sessions that demonstrate several types of interviews or helping sessions. I asked students to discuss the helpful and the unhelpful behaviors, based on Carkhuff’s model and the unhelpful behaviors. Next I asked students to comment on instances when one's cultural experience might challenge some of the assumptions we make using this training model. Then I asked students to begin practicing the attending behaviors as discussed in this module. For this particular learning module, students completed a written assignment outlining the helpful and unhelpful attending behaviors. I also asked students to comment on the discussion board regarding the cultural discrepancies. This type of transformation was completed with each learning module or objective.

**Blackboard**

Blackboard is the learning management system (LMS) used by the UC Clermont College. This web-based instruction platform allows students to access course material in an asynchronous, or self-paced manner. This platform holds course documents and links to online material. Students submit their work through the links provided and receive feedback on the assignments as well as their grade. Within Blackboard students receive announcements about assignments as well as email from the instructor and other students. Blackboard offers a link to
Elluminate, which is an electronic whiteboard that has audio conferencing capabilities and allows for a two-way exchange of information in a synchronous environment.

The student orientation to the course, link to the syllabus and assignments were all uploaded to Blackboard at the beginning of the quarter. Students were given assignments on a weekly basis, and the upcoming week’s assignments were not made available to the students until the beginning of each week. A general announcement was provided to students on Monday, and an audio recording or audio power point presentation assisted students in navigating the weekly material. After one or two weeks, most students understood the format of the course and the layout of the material.

Definition of Key Terms

The following list of terms is commonly known in online teaching and will be referred to in this study:

Instructional Technology Terms:

Asynchronous – Refers to the delivery of material that allows students to complete the course work by a specific period of time, but not necessarily at the same time as other students.

Synchronous – Refers to online learning that takes place at the same time, simultaneously.

Learning Management System (LMS) – Refers to the e-learning system that allows instructors to upload their syllabus and course content for students to access.

Media or medium – Refers to the platform used to facilitate the learning module. This includes, but is not limited to: discussion board, video, audio, Elluminate, the web, or second life.
Online Learning – According to Allen and Seaman (2008), an online course is where most or all of the content is delivered online. Typically the classes have no face-to-face meetings (2008).

Traditional course or face-to-face course – According to Allen and Seaman (2008), this is where the course is taught with no online technology. Students meet with the instructor to obtain the course material in writing or orally.

Hybrid course – For the purpose of this study, hybrid courses refer to those courses that contain both face-to-face time as well as online instruction.

Helping Technique Terms:

Attending Behavior or Skills – Involves physically positioning oneself to listen and observe the helpee (Carkhuff, 2009).

Closed-ended questions – Questions that can be responded to with a yes or no response or other questions that respond to a question as opposed to exploring one’s response.

Discrimination (knowledge) – Refers to the student’s ability to determine whether a response is effective or helpful and congruent with what the helpee has expressed (Carkhuff, 1969a). This is a cognitive learning process that involves the student developing an understanding of the helper’s actions and articulating the action steps by identifying and rating effectiveness.

Empathy – Defined as the capacity for participating in and understanding the feelings or ideas of another. The feeling of empathy is to become “one” with another and his or her ideas about the world (Carkhuff, 2009).
Interpersonal Helping Skills – Refers to the micro-level skills taught in this course that include, (a) attending behavior, (b) listening, (c) observing, (d) reflecting on content, (e) reflecting on feeling, and (f) reflecting on meaning.

Listening Skills – Refers to the helper’s ability to understand the verbal expressions (Carkhuff, 2009).

Observing Skills – Refers to the ability to see and to understand the nonverbal behavior of the helpee (Carkhuff, 2009).

Open-ended question – Questions that ask the client to describe perceptions, information feelings, or further explain a previous statement.

Responding to Content – Refers to the act of responding to the helpees verbal expressions that identifies the basic interrogatives (who, what, when, why, where and how) (Carkhuff, 2009).

Response to feeling – Responding to the helpees’ expressed feelings (Carkhuff, 2009).

Response to meaning – Responding to both the feeling and the content expressed by the helpee (Carkhuff, 2009).

Design of the Study

My study uses a mixed-method, quasi experimental, pre- and post-test design that utilizes quantitative, qualitative and action-research components. As a reflective practitioner I value the process of reflexive thinking. Although, I was not familiar with the term reflective practitioner prior to my doctoral program, the story I shared in Chapter 1 regarding my first teaching experience models this reflective practice. Twelve years later I am still considering ways to improve teaching in the same course. This is absolutely foundational for my teaching
and learning. Clarke and Erikson (2003) discuss the importance of lifelong learning and reference Bullough and Pinnegar (2001): "Quality self-study research requires that the researcher negotiate a particularly sensitive balance between biography and history...such study does not focus on the self per se but on the space between self and the practice engaged in" (p. 4).

Action research focuses on solving specific problems faced by local practitioners in their classroom or communities (Lewin, 1946). By continually observing students through the discussion board forums and assignments and assessing their performance along with my teaching, I was able to make changes to improve the learning opportunity for future students.

Originally this study was going to involve only one online class with a core component of developing interpersonal helping skills. However, I was able to teach a second online course the following quarter, so I asked the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for a modification to include the second class as part of the study. This turned out to be a tremendous asset for this research because my reflective practice became important in assessing the impact of changes made on the delivery of course material, on the second group of students, and I was able to increase the overall number of students involved in the study.

The single subject, repeated-measure design was used to collect data from students regarding knowledge and skills. By adding a second class to the study, I was able to evaluate the changes made in my teaching and the impact on the second class of students. Student surveys were collected at the beginning of class to provide basic demographic information, and satisfaction surveys provided qualitative data for this study.
Data collection

The University of Cincinnati IRB reviewed the protocol for this study, consent form, survey instrument and recruitment script for students. The original approval was granted and assigned the identification # 11-09-26-05. Students were informed of the study at the beginning of the quarter. Students were provided with an orientation video that outlined the course requirements and the nature of the study. They were informed that participation in the study would not, in any way, impact their grade in the course. Students were assured their names would not be used and most of the information would be discussed in aggregate form. Consent for the study was sent to Dr. Rick Butts and the participants' names were not released until after the grades were submitted to the registrar. The same procedure was followed for the second class in the winter quarter.

Students were directed to a folder under the document tab on the LMS. Information regarding the research was included in my audio power point presentation. In the recording I read the recruitment script and directed students to the folder that outlined my research and invited students to participate in the study. Students were given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study through email, the discussion board, or face-to-face (during my office hours on campus). Students were asked to send my colleague, Dr. Butts, an email indicating their preference regarding their participation. This was done so points could be assigned for completing the consent, regardless of the decision made by the student. Dr. Butts provided me with a list student names which indicated that they had contacted him regarding the study but he did not divulge whether they gave consent to participate. Students who agreed to participate were asked to type their name in the signature line on the consent form.
and attach the document to an email and send it to Dr. Butts. Students were informed that there was no difference in learning opportunities for students who agreed to participate and for those who chose not to participate. I was not privy to students’ status regarding the study until after the grades were turned into the registrar. Students provided consent for their pre- and post-test results, demographic surveys, and satisfaction surveys.

Participants

Twenty-two students, from the two classes, agreed to participate in this research study. Most students were female (21) and identified themselves as Caucasian. The majority of students were required to take this course for their degree program. These programs include: (a) Human Social Services, (b) Social Work, (c) Criminal Justice, and (d) Medical Assisting. The branch college, UC Clermont, offers primarily two-year programs that transfer to baccalaureate universities or two-year terminal degrees.

The Clermont branch campus has approximately 4,000 students enrolled. Because of the increasing number of online programs and courses, there is a potential for students from other campuses within the university to enroll in Clermont online courses.

Approximately 60% of the students enrolled at the Clermont campus attend class during the day and 40% attend in the evening. The overall college population is approximately 60% female and 40% male.

The majority of the students enrolled in the class are students in Human Social Services, Addictions, or Social Work. These students tend to be older (70% are over the age of 26), and female (79%). This trend resembles the type of students seeking online learning.
Measurement

Data collected for this study includes pre- and post-test scores for both knowledge and skills. The question of skills is determined by students completing a pre-test for skills case-study that is evaluated using the Discrimination Skills Assessment, designed by Carkhuff (1969). The instrument that I used to assess knowledge of skills is Carkhuff’s Discrimination Skills Assessment (1969) Rating Scales. It uses a 5-point rating scale describing the effectiveness of the responses provided in the case study. Then in week nine, students were assigned a second test using a different scenario. They were asked to rate responses to helping situations based on Carkhuff’s helping scale, and they were asked to follow the same instructions as they did in completing the pre-test. Students were given the following instructions as outlined in the Art of Helping Trainer’s Guide (Carkhuff, 2010):

To give you an idea of your current skill level at judging the effectiveness of response, consider several alternative responses that might have been made by someone trying to be helpful. I will read what the helpee said, and then I will present several helper responses and you will rate the effectiveness of each response. Use this rating scale (p. 19).

1 – Very Ineffective
2 – Ineffective
3 – Minimally Effective
4 - Very Effective
5 – Extremely Effective
Students are assigned a score based on the number of correct responses they have. Although these ratings categories appear subjective, they are aligned with the Discrimination Rating Measures in table (1).

The second research question attempts to determine skill level at the beginning of the course and then again in week nine of the quarter. Students are given instructions to place a helping situation in context. Students are asked to write a response to the situation as if they were in a helping role. Responses are rated by the instructor using Carkhuff’s Levels of Helping Scale.

The Carkhuff trainer’s manual offers specific guidelines for trainers regarding rating responses.

1. **Read the helpee stimulus statement and determine what an interchangeable (level 3.0) response (You feel ____ because____) to meaning might be.**

2. **Now read the trainee’s response. Determine if the trainee’s response is a level 3.0 or not. If it is not, determine its level by comparing it to the descriptions of each response level of the Carkhuff Helping Scale.** (p. 22)

The training manual then goes on to describe compound responses and how to rate these as well as other complex statements. Students' ratings are recorded in the LMS. I assigned an overall score based on the rating scale. In week nine, the same process as described for the pre-test was utilized for the post-test. Students were asked to respond, as in a helping situation, to a case study. Students uploaded their responses through the LMS, and then I assigned a score based on Carkhuff’s rating scales. Once the pre-test skills were recorded, a second evaluator, a doctoral candidate and independently licensed social worker, trained in
using the Carkhuff model, assessed students' responses using the same scale. The scores for both raters were recorded in an SPSS database, and a K-test is run to determine inter-rater reliability.

Throughout the two classes, students were taught what makes a response helpful as it reflects the meaning of what the helpee has stated. Students understand that asking questions or giving advice are low levels of helping because they do not encourage the helpee to explore their experience. This scale has been tested for reliability and validity for almost forty years. A study by Leitner (1972) specifically addressed inter-rater reliability using the five level rating scales. The findings were consistent with others' findings when the scales were consistently applied by trained graduate students evaluating counseling effectiveness. The discrimination ability was not consistent for graduate students when discriminating their own effectiveness. They tended to rate their skills higher than outside raters.

For the purpose of the study, students were given a grade for completing the pre- and post-test as opposed to giving them a score for the correct responses. It was important that students understand the significance of evaluating their knowledge and skills at the beginning and at the end of the course and that they were not being graded on their knowledge but just on completing the assignment. I recognize the dilemma with rating students' response to helping situations. This construct appears subjective; however, Dr. Carkhuff clearly delineates the parameters for evaluating helper responses in the training manual.

I also want to note that this is one of the tensions that exist in teaching helping skills. Rating a student's understanding of another person's expression by how they respond may seem overly subjective. I feel it is the very foundation students need to develop a professional presence and
develop a framework from which they can internally evaluate their own helpfulness in many different situations.

Table 1.

*Carkhuff’s Discrimination Rating Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Initiating steps</td>
<td>Accurate response to personalized problem and goal and operation statement of steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Defining goals</td>
<td>Accurate response to personalized problem and goal and operation definition of goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Personalizing problem, feeling and goal</td>
<td>Accurate response to personalize feeling and goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Personalize meaning</td>
<td>Accurate response to feeling and personalized meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Response to meaning</td>
<td>Accurate response to feeling and meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Response to feeling</td>
<td>Accurate response to feeling but content absent or inaccurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Response to content</td>
<td>Accurate response to content but feeling absent or inaccurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Attending</td>
<td>Indirect but accurate response to contend without any direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Non-attending</td>
<td>Feeling and content both absent or inaccurate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Demographic Information and Satisfaction Surveys**

In the first week of class, students were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire. This questionnaire was part of orientation to the course, and the students were awarded points for completing the assignment. Once the information was collected, it was recorded in an SPSS data base and used to describe the sample population.

Upon completion of the course, students were asked to complete a satisfaction survey. The survey was used to understand their learning experience in this online course. The mostly open-ended questions were designed for students to explore their learning experience and reflect on the process.

The following are questions to which students were asked to respond:

1. Please describe what knowledge you believe you acquired as a result of taking this course.
2. Please describe the skills you believe you developed as a result of taking this course.
3. Please describe your overall experience in this course.
4. What technology challenges did you need to overcome in order to successfully complete this course?
5. Please respond to the following statement by agreeing or disagreeing.

   *I was successful at developing interpersonal communication skills in an online environment.*

**Critical Inquiry**

An additional source of data was my own reflective journals. Using Kiser's (2012) IPM with some adaptations I captured my experience while teaching this course. Each week I recorded personal observations made throughout the ten-week course. I used these reflections to
change the course material during the second quarter of teaching. These reflections were also coded based on emergent themes and reported in the result section of this study.

This theme of continually reflecting on practice is supported by the mixed-methods research design. Kotter and Shepard (2004) focus on the interdependence between quantitative and qualitative research in how counselors conceptualize cases. This multidimensional approach of counseling looks at the problem or situation from a variety of angles to assist the practitioner in not only processing the experience but capturing what they need to do as they move on professionally. The action researcher is continually monitoring, assessing and adjusting to improve processes. Burke (2009) describes the five step process traditionally used in action research as:

- Problem formulation
- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Reporting of results and
- Action planning

In an effort to remain reflective and dynamic in the online course, I developed a reflective model to assist in capturing the pieces of each step along with formative assessment techniques to continually evaluate and capture my experience in this course. This reflective process will follow this adapted cycle:
This new model integrates my reflective process and uses rating scales to quantify my teaching and learning experience for this study.

**Procedure**

The first week of class students are sent an email introducing them to the online course and providing them with a starting point once they log onto the class through the LMS. Students are asked to review the syllabus and then taken through an orientation recording. The recording is a power point presentation recorded using Camtasia software. This software provides high quality presentations that can be saved in a variety of formats that can be uploaded to Blackboard, and most students have no problem opening with the standard software package on most computers.
Once students listen to the recording, they are directed to the orientation tab on the LMS. In the orientation tab students are able to find links to various websites including the UC library and Blackboard tutorials. The tutorials walk a student through the process of saving and uploading assignments through the LMS. Students will also find instructions to send an email through Blackboard as well as instructions for posting to the discussion board. Finally, students were asked to take a quiz on the syllabus to confirm they have read the document.

Each week students were sent an email announcing the opening of the weekly assignment folder. Each folder contains an audio power point presentation and links to videos, audio and websites. Students were given several assignments and asked to either complete an assignment where they demonstrate their understanding of the material in writing or post to a discussion board. The discussion board often integrates a personal experience along with the material discussed in the current week’s readings. Students were asked to provide an original post by Friday and respond to others’ posts by Sunday at midnight. As the instructor, I commented on each student’s original posting. Through my postings I often clarified myths or provided additional information continually tying in key pieces of information that students may not have linked independent of this additional instruction.

Prior to the end of each week, I sent an email to all students reminding them about their deadlines and offering additional information if warranted. This might include upcoming live sessions or deadline dates for recordings. On Monday of each week I would grade their assignments and provide feedback on the prior week’s material. Depending on the weekly assignment I might add an MP4 file that I recorded to explain material the students did not
understand. I did this to save time so I did not need to re-record all the audio power point presentations that were recorded for the fall class.

To deliver this course online I needed to spend a significant amount of time reviewing sources for video. Weekly I perused the Google Video search engine to assist in this endeavor. My goal was to find digital media to assist in helping students achieve the learning objective. Occasionally I was able to match a video from the Ohio Links library collection. The videos were used to engage students in dialogue about their observations and non-verbal behavior.

Each Monday I opened the weekly assignment folder. All assignments were to be completed by Sunday of the same week. I only had one week's worth of material open at a time. I did not want students working ahead, and I provided deadlines on Sunday night so students do not fall too far behind. Students were encouraged to use the discussion board to post general questions. Other students were permitted to respond to those questions if they felt confident, and they received credit for responding. Students were encouraged to email me if they have a question regarding a grade or of a personal nature.

The synchronous sessions required me to prepare my presentation ahead of time and practice what I want to communicate in the "real-time" format. Because it was such a dynamic learning environment, I felt compelled to be concise in both my delivery and with the material. Each Elluminate session requires a mini orientation to the platform, and this normally took two or three minutes. Then students had to complete a microphone set-up check to make sure they could be heard. There was also the issue of individual's entering the session after the class has started. All of these additional issues required me to be focused on my objectives so as to prevent getting lost in the delivery. The objective for each session was to practice the listening
skills by first modeling the behavior, allowing students to practice and then offering immediate feedback on their use of the skills.

**Data Analysis**

Data Analysis from this study was performed on the following data sets:

1. Demographic information
2. Pre- and post-test scores for knowledge regarding discriminating skills
3. Pre- and post-test scores for skills
4. Satisfaction surveys
5. Practitioner inquiry (instructor reflections)

The pre- and post-test discrimination score was recorded, and a paired t-test statistic was run to determine the difference in students’ knowledge of effective helping statements. The same procedure took place for the students’ skill attainment.

Grounded Theory provided the framework for gathering and analyzing qualitative data in this study. This eclectic approach was chosen to understand the overall experience for teaching the class as well as triangulate the data for the first and second research questions. This framework supports the circular inquiry process used for my reflective practice, captures the student experience, and corroborates the research findings. The demographic information was summarized to categorize student demographic characteristics. Additionally, students were asked to rate their comfort with online courses and rate their current listening skills. These ratings were used to assist in understanding students’ perception of their listening skills and computer skills prior to taking this online course.
Themes were recorded for the first three questions. The initial grouping was based primarily on recurrence of the same statement. Students were asked specifically about knowledge and skills and they listed the knowledge and skills they obtained. Once the frequency of skills was grouped, the data was again reviewed to determine linkage or use of the skills. Eventually a third layer of thematic analysis was completed identifying how or why students felt successful in developing interpersonal communication skills in an online environment.

The reflective comments were also coded and themed based on a similar manner as the student comments. The second round of coding allowed me to identify important teaching practices to assist me in understanding what I needed to do differently to improve my teaching. The remaining comments can be reviewed in Appendix F.

The multiple sources of data and methods used in this study are important for data and methods triangulation. Using students’ direct statements as data decreases the inference descriptors and increases the participants’ voice in this study (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The qualitative, quantitative and action research elements are equally necessary in understanding the teaching and learning experience for this study. The findings are discussed in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4: Results

As an insider participating in this research study, I have had a unique opportunity to reflect upon the various data sources. Through this process I have come to value each data source as an individual entity and part of the whole. I recognize that each source is equally important and necessary to describe this experience. The first and second research question asks whether students can increase their knowledge and skills regarding interpersonal communication skills in an online course. The third research question is directed at my teaching and what I learned about delivering a course online.

The results of the study are described in this chapter. First I will discuss the participants’ characteristics. Then I will present the findings framed by the research questions. Finally, I will discuss the findings from my reflective process by highlighting themes that emerged from the analysis of the triangulated data collection from student surveys and my reflective process of teaching and learning.

Participants

The sample consisted of 22 undergraduate students. The sample included 21 females (95%) and 1 male student. Table 2 describes pertinent characteristics of the participants. All of the students were self-identified as Caucasian (n=22, 100%). Nineteen (86%) of the students stated that they were required to take this course for their degree program. Students ranged in age from 19 - 50 (m = 29.3, SD = 8.3). One of the 19 year old students was in class with the 50 year old; however, this was not known by the students. Fall quarter students were closer in age than the winter quarter students.
Approximately half of the participants indicated employment, either part-time or full-time, outside the home (46%). Through online discussions, many students enrolled indicated that they were either working full-time or had young children, and this was the impetus for taking the online course.

Students were asked to identify the number of prior online courses they had taken. The most frequently cited number of prior online classes was three. Forty three percent of students have either taken three or six online courses. There was one student who had never previously taken an online course, and there was one student who reported taking 30. Considering the data without this outlier, the highest number of online courses taken was ten. Three students indicated they had taken just one online course.

Students were asked to rate their comfort level with taking online courses. They were given a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 indicating they were extremely uncomfortable with online courses and 10 indicating they were very comfortable. The lowest rating was 5. However, approximately 65% scored between 8 and 10 (n=14). The average score was 9, which indicated a high level of comfort with online courses.

Next, students were asked to rate how strong their listening skills were prior to taking the course using the same measure of 1 to 10 with one indicating low level skills and 10 indicating high level listening skills. Eighty percent (n = 18) of students rated their listening skills between seven and ten. The average of these scores was an 8 (m = 7.64, SD = 1.42).

Finally, students were asked what grade they expect to receive in this course. One student indicated a grade of C and the remaining students indicated an A or B (95.7%). The following table describes the demographics from this study.
Table 2.

*Participant Characteristics (n = 22)*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>%</th>
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</table>
Pre- and Post-Test Scores Knowledge

The first research question asks whether there will be a difference between the pre- and post-test scores on knowledge of helping skills among undergraduate students in an online class. In order to assess the acquisition of knowledge in the study, students were asked to complete a pre-test and post-test regarding the acquisition of knowledge. Students completed the Discrimination Skills Assessment, designed by Dr. Carkhuff (1969). The tests were administered in the first week of class and again in the ninth week of class and are described in Table 3. Scores were assigned based on the number of correct responses. In a separate data base, I assigned an actual score based on Carkhuff’s Rating Scales. The pre- and post-knowledge test outlined a helping situation in which students rated 5 responses from very ineffective to very effective (Appendix F). The correct responses are reported in the following tables beginning with the combined scores and then by quarter. In the autumn quarter the helping situation and the responses were provided by Carkhuff in the student workbook. Even though students were asked to respond without looking through the workbook for the correct answers, it was evident by the high number of correct responses in the fall class (n=9) as compared to the pre-test of the winter class (n=2) when a different case study was provided.

The results for the winter class suggest students increased their understanding of the information begin discussed. The number of correct responses increased as students completed the 10 week course. The winter class results are more difficult to reflect upon. The most logical response is students read ahead and looked at the correct response to the pre-test and recorded the responses.
Table 3.

Fall and Winter Pre- and Post-test Knowledge Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Correct Responses</th>
<th>Pre-Knowledge</th>
<th>Post-Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre- and Post- Test Scores for Skills

The second question asks whether students can acquire interpersonal communication skills in an online environment. Will there be a difference between the pre- and post-test scores on skill development? Students were asked to respond to a helping situation. The responses, as described in Table 4, were documented and then scored, each based on Carkhuff’s Helping Scale Levels of Helping. Then a second rater, trained in Carkhuff’s model, was asked to score the responses to assure accuracy of rating. A Kappa-test was run for inter-rater reliability. These scores were entered into an SPSS data base.

One important question that is often asked when assessing student skill development by listening to recordings of helping sessions has to do with the reliability of the scores given to students rating their responses. Cohen’s kappa was used to assess the degree of agreement
between my scores and an outside reviewer who was proficient in teaching Carkhuff’s model.

The measure of agreement $k = .73$ indicating a high level of agreement.

Table 4.

*Fall and Winter Pre-and Post-Test Skill Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores</th>
<th>Pre-Skill</th>
<th>Post-Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n=22</td>
<td></td>
<td>N=22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Winter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response is not relevant to the helpee’s expression-1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response does not respond to the feelings expressed by the helpee-2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates an accurate understanding of content and feeling-3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A paired t-test for related samples was used to determine the mean differences in knowledge (See Table 5) between the pre-test score and post-test score for each student. The differences of pre and post-test in knowledge was not significantly different at the .05 level $t= (1.04)$, $p<.05$.

A paired t-test for related samples was used to determine differences in skills (See Table 5) and the average for the pre-test in skills was $(M = 1.13, SD = .548)$. The post-test had an
average (M = 2.35, SD = 7.14). The increase in skill development was significant t=\(-7.342\), p < .05.

The statistical results of the data provided in response to the questions are included in the following table:

Table 5.

*Results of Fall and Winter Pre-and Post-Test for Knowledge and Skills*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Knowledge</th>
<th>Post-Knowledge</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Std</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Std</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Skill</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>Post-Skill</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>5.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Winter</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Std</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Std</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Skill</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>Post-Skill</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Students’ Feedback*

Upon completion of the course, students were asked to complete a satisfaction survey. The survey was designed to give the students in the study an opportunity to voice their thoughts and experiences regarding this online course and to corroborate the test results. A separate course evaluation, deployed from the UC Clermont, was also provided to students in an anonymous format. The mostly open-ended questions were designed for students to evaluate their learning experience specifically in relation to the learning objectives and to reflect on the overall learning experience.
Students were given two points for completing the survey and the files were saved in a folder until the grades were turned over to the registrar. The study was designed so students would not feel pressure to participate. This aligned with the IRB requirements for this study.

Once the surveys were reviewed the comments from questions 1 through 3 (see Appendix F) were grouped based on emergent themes. Initially the groupings were based primarily on the most frequently cited statements. Students were asked specifically about knowledge and skills and they listed the knowledge and skills they obtained. Once the frequency of skills was grouped, the data was again reviewed to further understand the meaning of the students’ comments. Specifically, how they linked the usefulness of the skills. Eventually a third layer of thematic analysis was completed identifying how or why students felt successful using the skills. Figure 4 captures the layers of themes identified by students. The primary heading of each ranking captures the overall emergent theme and the second and third layer identifies how the skill translates into tangible outcomes identified by the student.
The most frequently referenced word in the student survey was listening. The word listening was referenced more than 28 times. The references ranged from the knowledge or "how to" listen all the way to providing examples of where they have integrated these skills into daily interactions. The following example demonstrates the actual use of the listening skills:

I have learned how to become a better listener. This is especially true when it comes to talking with my husband. I now sit down and listen to what he has to say instead of not listening to it at all.

Most of the students’ comments on listening reflect awareness that prior to taking this class their actually listening skills were scarce and when they should have been listening to others they were paying attention to something else. Two students comment on this in the following statements:

1) My ability to listen now is more productive and un-intrusive.
2) I have really learned how to listen better in all settings not just in helping ones. This class has helped me learn the material in my other classes also.

Seven students commented specifically on their ability to listen without judgment. This theme directly relates to one specific assignment given to students that seemed to increase self awareness and test student’s ability to actually listen even when they know their beliefs are opposed to another's beliefs and opinions.

The second most common theme had to do with responding skills. Most students assume those in a helping role give advice and tell others how to solve their problem(s). This is reflected in the skills pre-test. Students were asked to respond to a helping situation and some students wrote a full page of advice giving, sharing personal stories and telling the helpee they should think differently about their situation.

The format for offering responses is often a significant deviation from the types of responses students would normally offer to others. The Carkhuff model teaches students to first reflect the content of what they have heard or paraphrase “So you are saying _______ “. This format initially feels foreign for the students. As they practice the skills they learn to express the content and the feeling using the Carkhuff model the students gravitate toward a format that expresses; “You feel _____ because _____”. Quite often students get caught up in the format and fail to understand or capture the essence of the reflective statement. As I make my way through the training manual and I play out the closed ended question traps, which means I respond by offering a series of yes/no or one word responses, students begin to understand the relevance of the practice model. There were twenty responses that included statements about responding. Five of the 20 were specific to developing concise responses.
One student captures this precisely in describing what she has learned: "The ability to capture the sentiment of what someone is saying in just a few words."

Other students discuss their ability to respond to others without asking questions or interrupting them while they are speaking. The following demonstrates these comments:

1) Learning to paraphrase has really helped me to be more involved with the other person’s issue.

2) I also learned how to be a good listener and how to respond back to people.

3) I learned the right way to respond to them without parroting or elongating my responses.

One emergent theme I had not anticipated was students ability to practice being in the here and now. Although four students specifically used these words there were several other references to this practice. I had not anticipated this feedback because I did not think students really understood the purpose for the exercises based on the weekly journals that reflected tasks over the actual practice of mindfulness. I discuss this in my reflection (see Appendix A), and as a result of my personal interest in mindfulness, I was able to bring this practice to my online class. I was just not sure how it would translate in the online format. Two students wrote:

1) One thing that I learned from this class was how to be present in my life.

2) Learning how to be present when listening is the best new skill I have acquired.

Students consistently captured the next theme throughout their comments. This theme emerged as physically attending. From this overall theme there were two sub-themes. The first one was eye contact. Five students documented their challenges with making eye contact
with others. One student wrote, "I had problems with eye contact while talking with someone. I am slowly starting to overcome this." Another student captured the eye contact as well as other components of attending physically. She writes: "I learned the skills ... sitting square and looking at the person by giving good eye contact and keeping my body movements in check."

The second sub-theme was observing others' body language. The winter class offered a greater number of comments regarding observation and inferences as well as body language. I recognize this is probably a result of the changes I made as a result of my reflective process and changing the assignment for the second class. Students seemed to engage in the discussion regarding body language and what we can infer from this. One student captures this in the following comment:

I have learned about body language and the meaning of it. I am able to be less judgmental, and jump to conclusions.

Each of the emergent themes can be tied back to the learning objectives for the course. The learning objective in week 5 indicates students will demonstrate listening skills. The thematic response indicates improved listening skills.

The third layer reflects the gain by the student on a more personal level. The third question allowed them to express openly their experience in this course. Most of the comments were positive and revealing. The themes that emerged in this third question provided an overall understanding of their learning experience. Students’ comments reflected a new confidence in their use of technology, career choice and relationships. These themes are important for the purpose of this study because of the resistance to online teaching that was outlined in Chapter 2. Many social work faculty are resistant to teaching practice based courses online. Although
students' comments are one side of the learning experience, students' post-test scores as well as grades on their final recordings corroborate the test results.

Empowerment is a term often used to describe the process of assisting others with achieving their inner strength or developing an awareness of this strength. Nanette Page (1999) describes empowerment as a multi-dimensional social process that increases individual power and helps people gain control over their own lives, by acting on issues they define as important. As the students in these classes discussed their overall experience, I did not necessarily anticipate this theme but certainly felt connected with the students as they described this process. The following statements reflect this theme:

1. I have a lot more confidence with using technology
2. This course was very helpful. I feel more confident that I can move forward in my school career and towards a working career with having the ability to help others more effectively.

The no-significant difference phenomenon that was discussed in Chapter 2 recognizes the value of online courses in their ability to provide an equitable learning environment for content based courses. Although the pre- and post-test scores for knowledge were not significant for knowledge acquisition, the students were clearly successful in understanding new material based on their feedback. The knowledge framework suggests they have new meaning for behaviors they frequently engage in such as listening, responding and physically attending. The changing role from a student to a professional requires students to think and behave differently. Students reflected this in their responses.
One student wrote:

My overall experience was great. I learned many new skills that I can actually apply in my career when I am out there working. Knowing how to communicate well in a given situation is a great tool to have.

The primary focus of this study is on skills. In the end, if students cannot behave in a manner that produces positive results for the helpee, then all the information they have becomes irrelevant. Interpersonal skills are critical in developing intimacy and trust in a relationship. These skills are developed with practice and feedback as discussed in Chapter 2. Many students recognize this is a beginning, and they must develop and increase these foundational skills as they grow professionally. Overall, students recognize a change in their behaviors related to interpersonal communication. One student reflects this in the following statement:

I love this class. I learned how to communicate better with my family and with my fiancé. I am learning to listen better and actually pay attention to what they are saying to me.

**Challenges**

Although first-time online students were not encouraged to take this course, inevitably there was one student enrolled who had not taken a previous online course. None of the students indicated they had experienced a synchronous online session in any of their previous online classes. Students comment extensively about the using Elluminate as expressed in the following as well as the first time online student captures her experience in the following comment:
I needed to feel more comfortable talking through a mic when everyone can hear me on a whole new program (elluminate live) that I had to learn how to use. I also needed to make sure to check my email and blackboard daily.

I learned how to use the Elluminae tool to communicate over the internet. I had no clue how to use this before but found out that it was actually quite simple.

The trust and connection between students was completely unexpected. Having taught previous online courses I recognize the boundaries students have with online experiences. There are no dirty looks if a student expresses a differing opinion or fails to correctly respond to a question. The online course offers extensive privacy for students. This is why I was elated by the connections students made with each other. I had one situation where a student failed to show for a practice session and the other students physically stopped by my office to let me know about this. I discuss this in my reflection (see Appendix A), but I was excited to read students observations of the relationships with me, the instructor and with other students. The following comments outline this theme:

1. I am not sure if it was due to the anonymity of the course but the class opened up on a personal level that I was surprised to see. I was apprehensive about taking a communications course online. I didn’t see how it would work out. I was quite thrilled when it turned out as positive as it did.

2. My overall experience with this class was excellent. All the students were willing to help each other and Jill was a wonderful teacher. I believe my grade will only be a C, but I did work hard and learn so much. If I could pick a class like this one again I would.
3. I had a good experience in this class. I am pretty shy, but I found that communicating online was way easier than if I were in class.

**Practitioner Inquiry Data**

The same procedure was used for my own reflective process. The reflecting process was themed to capture the “lessons learned” in this research study as well as performance improvement. Changes were made in the delivery of material as a result of this reflective process. The results from my initial reflections were used in both formative and summative assessment for this course. Changes were made in the winter quarter class based on my personal reflections and the student's feedback. Data was collected from the journals and coded based on themes. The emergent themes included engagement, clarity, decisiveness, and technology.

Engagement is noted in my reflections immediately, I understand how important it is for students to feel connected to the instructor, other students and the course material. As I developed the course I intentionally included assignments that would engage the students and allow for exploration as they became involved in the course material. Engagement was particularly noted throughout my reflections but also in online discussions that took place. One example of the reflection on engagement was captured when students were asked to read material on culture and share a stereotype that they held for many years until they recognized the stereotype was just that. The following reflection acknowledges how engaged the students are in the course:

> In the online environment I am amazed at the discussions students have regarding their own personal stereotypes. We spend an entire week discussing this topic and it
is refreshing to witness student's openly exploring their beliefs and understanding of others' culture. I have found the discussion forum to be rich and full of ideas that are not always openly discussed. I wonder what makes the online environment a safe place to share these ideas. I tend to be less willing to discuss personal information online but this discussion is more revealing than the discussions in my face to face class.

The second identified emergent theme is identified as clarity with outlining assignments. As I review my reflections I noticed a pattern of needing to clarify my expectations for students when I give instructions for the assignment. In some instances I offer verbal instructions in the recordings but I recognize that some students do not listen to all the recordings before they send an email and ask for questions. Clarity was indicated in my reflections on the workbook assignments as well as the recordings. In a face-to-face class the clarity is less of an issue because I offer verbal instructions as well as written instructions. Students ask questions as the verbal instructions are being provided. Students also provide non-verbal facial expressions that I have learned are cues for not understanding my instructions. I will often make a mental note and clarify instructions on the next time I give the assignment. The following reflection captures the concept of clarity:

Students were asked to keep a journal of their attending behavior and discuss it on the discussion board as well as hand in a journal where they track their attending behavior for the week. I provided an example and I thought this would assist students. I rate my comfort with this exercise at a 5. What I need to do going forward is give students more clear instructions on what constitutes a week and what I expect to be documented in
the journal. I also need to emphasize the purpose of this assignment – what it is they did to prepare themselves to attend. Students seem to talk about what they are doing to be organized. Maybe I need to highlight the link between being organized and being successful at attending. I will consider Jill Bolte’s presentation on the left brain and the right brain. It highlights what we must do to be in the here and now. I need to give more specific instructions and outline the purpose of the journal and not just about listing all their activities. Many of us who are busy are organized. That does not mean we don't text and drive or surf the net while eating dinner with our family. Attending is about being present. I am able to model this through Elluminate but I am not sure how to make this more relevant at this point in time.

Decisiveness was the third theme I identified throughout my reflections. I am not sure how well I actually documented my indecisiveness but I certainly experienced it internally. The synchronous sessions created much indecisiveness for me. In the fall quarter students pushed back against the synchronous sessions until they listened to a recorded session or talked to a classmate that shared a positive experience using Elluminate. I also believe I felt indecisive at times because of the resistance I experience anytime I change what has been posted. Another area I experienced problems was when I required students to work in groups for their round robin sessions. Students wanted to push back and offered to use family members; however, I explained this would not work because the family members did not have the skills to offer meaningful feedback.

Formative assessment encourages us to continually evaluate student’s understanding of the material and make adjustments based on this understanding. This must be balanced with
achieving the learning objectives for the course. I am transparent when I make changes to the syllabus and I share this with the students. The following reflection captures my ambivalence regarding the Elluminate sessions;

My next challenge is how to offer points on these sessions. Students who work and cannot make the session should not be penalized however, I feel strongly about students participating in the sessions and it makes a huge difference in the development of the skills. I will need to continue to find ways to be fair yet firm as it relates to these sessions.

Finally, the use of technology was an ongoing theme in my reflections. As I noted in Chapter 1, I am not a technology-minded person. There are some areas of instruction I feel completely confident in offering guidance however, technology is not one of them. When the fall class struggled with uploading their recorded sessions, I knew something would need to change; however, I did not know exactly what or how to change this. I capture this challenge in the following reflection:

During the first quarter I taught the course online students were asked to upload their recordings to the discussion board. Five students were successful with this assignment. A few students sent me their recordings through email. Two students brought their recordings to me on a jump drive. One student just flat out did not complete the assignment. As a result of this challenging assignment I anticipated problems and I built in safeguards for this with the second course. I rated this as a 5 and I knew talking about technology was problematic. Students needed to actually record and upload their assignment. This is the only way they would know whether or not they had the ability
to be successful at this task. In the winter quarter I anticipated the same problems so I specifically had students engage in this earlier in the quarter.

During week four and week six I asked students to record and upload sessions. I then asked them to email the recorded session to themselves and play the session to assure the file size was not too large. In week 7 students were asked to upload their first recording. Twelve students in the second class were successful uploading their recorded sessions or the link to their recording.

The data elements I have discussed in this chapter are a summary and the entire list of student comments and my reflective journal are located in the appendix. This chapter offers a summary of the data that was collected during the two quarters this course was offered. In the following chapter I will discuss the meaning of these results and the implication for teaching and learning.
Chapter 5: Discussion

My Research Agenda

My passion for teaching and learning and my commitment to the behavioral health field are the driving forces behind this study. I genuinely had no preconceived ideas about the outcome of this study. My interest is to inform teaching and assist students in developing professional skills. This study originally set out to investigate whether or not interpersonal helping skills could be developed in an online environment. As I became more involved in researching this topic, it evolved into something much more. Initially, I wanted the study to highlight the benefits of manualized or highly structured training programs and how teachers and students can benefit from this type of structured learning. As my interest and curiosity regarding online learning evolved, I felt compelled to ascertain whether these skills could be learned online. And finally, after taking a series of action research classes in my doctoral program, this organic study evolved.

I recognize the tensions and opposing viewpoints regarding knowledge attainment and research practices in this study. By tensions I am referring to my role as a researcher and my role as the instructor. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) outline aspects of practitioner inquiry and suggest that “all of the participants in inquiry communities are regarded as knowers, learners, and researchers” (p. 42). As this study evolved and my appreciation for divergent practices to inform my teaching and learning grew, I felt compelled to not only consider test scores but equally to explore the process for both the instructor and the student. Teaching and learning are individual experiences and each participant has the opportunity to shape the results of this study. In this chapter, I plan to discuss the findings and results outlined in
Chapter 4 as well as the meaning of these results as they relate to existing literature. I then plan to highlight limitations of the study and suggestions for future studies. Finally, I will discuss the implications for teaching and learning.

**Findings**

The first research question asks whether there will be a difference between the pre- and post-test scores on knowledge of helping skills among undergraduate students in an online class. The results of this research question are important and will be presented within the context of the original research question. However, I intentionally delayed the discussion on knowledge and how it is acquired until this point. I don’t assume students are acquiring new knowledge but I am suggesting they are learning a new framework in which to consider existing knowledge and how it applies to the Carkhuff model. Kenneth Bruffee (1999) suggests, "knowledge is not universal and absolute. It is local and historically changing. We construct it and reconstruct it, time after time, and build it up in layers" (p. 222). Students in this class understand helping responses. They understand concepts and ideas related to listening, observing, and responding. This new framework that takes their current understanding and use of basic communication skills and suggests the same skills be used in a more deliberate, structured manner to engage and help others.

The pre-test for knowledge that was given to students in the fall class was actually in the student workbook. Although students were asked to complete the pre-test without looking ahead at the workbook, nine of twelve students in the fall class scored a 5 of 5 on the pre-test. As a result the post-test scores were lower than the pre-test scores. In the winter class, a different case study, not located in the student workbook was given as a pre-test for
knowledge. The results for the winter class pre- and post-test knowledge scores indicate an increase in scores however, the results were not significant. These findings suggest that students are learning the new model; however, they are not fully immersed into this format as a model for responding to others. This is based on both the student pre- and post- test scores as well as their final recordings. Having taught this course for 10 years, students traditionally begin to internalize or incorporate this model into their non-academic behaviors about the fourth or fifth week during the second quarter of the Communications for Professional Services II class. I base this statement on their ability to discriminate their use of the skills in their individual transcripts of recorded sessions. I also see this when students quickly interject statements during our discussion such as, “that was a response to meaning” or “that was a content response”. Once the mechanics of the steps become less burdensome for students they seem to understand the meaning of statements listening to others.

Additionally, the t-test results from the winter class were consistent with the comments documented on the surveys. When students discuss the relevance of paraphrasing and using the helpers’ words over parroting, they are articulating new ways of thinking about communication skills. I understand the students’ statements about learning and what it takes to become a more effective listener are reflective of an increase in knowledge, not only from the standpoint of new knowledge, but also from the meaning students give to listening and responding to others. Students have been told from their first day in school to listen to their teachers yet many of them spend most of their classroom hours not listening. As students learn about becoming a more effective listener they can tie this into their chosen profession and understand the steps involved in listening and attending to what is being said.
The “No significant difference” phenomenon suggests there is no difference between the learning outcome with online courses and face-to-face courses (Macy, Rooney, Hollister, & Freddolino, 2001). The research was based on content driven courses and not practice based courses. The issue of knowledge is less contentious than skill development in the online environment. The survey of Social Work faculty and their views of online learning do not protest knowledge or content based courses being developed for Social Work Students as long as the practice based courses were left to teach in a traditional environment. Although the results of this first research question reflect mixed results, the students’ survey reflect a new understanding of the course content as they reflect upon their learning in the course.

In Chapter 2, I discussed Malcolm Knowles (1980) whose contributions toward helping understand pedagogy geared toward the adult learner was discussed. The significance of the learners’ role and their life experiences cannot be overstated. Knowles highlights the significance of relevant learning that is geared toward the present and not just the future. In both the satisfaction survey and the online final posting, students discussed their learning experience. In the discussions students consistently highlighted their application of knowledge and skills, articulated from this course, as they relates to their personal life. Mothers discussed listening to their teens. Daughters discussed listening to their mothers; employees (students) discussed listening to their bosses. Several students discussed their ability to de-escalate interchanges that would have previously been escalated into a heated discussion.

The second research question asks whether there will be a difference between the pre- and post-test scores for helping skills among undergraduate students in an online class. The t-test showed that mean scores of skill development increased significantly in both the fall class and
the winter class. A Kappa test was run to assess inter-rater reliability among those individuals rating the skills. In students surveys the use of the skills was consistently referenced as was important relationships in which they are utilizing the skills. In our online discussion board final forum, students consistently reflected concepts related to empathy. Students stated they had not really considered how others felt until they took this class. The emphasis on developing empathy was never actually articulated except in the learning objectives; however, students’ comments reflected this process as they documented their journey in this course.

One possible explanation for the finding regarding skill development was the structure of the course. Students understood from the first day of classes they would need to record helping sessions. Because of this unique method of assessment students may have spent more time focusing on the skill development over content. Additionally, as the instructor, I may have designed the course with an over-emphasis on skill development rather than content. For example, in my face-to-face courses I often download the publisher’s test banks and study guides for students to assist them in studying for an objective test. In this course I assessed their content knowledge by having them review videos and discussing the observed behaviors and whether these were observations or inferences. Next they would need to indicate whether there was a high, medium or low level of congruence between what they were saying and how it was being stated. This type of test has more of an emphasis on application verses attainment of their knowledge.

In Chapter 2, a significant amount of the research that was discussed supported the teaching of helping skills using modeling and feedback over lecture. In an attempt to balance content and skill I uploaded audio Power Point presentations to the LMS in an effort to
breakdown course content. Despite this strategy, I recognize there continued to be a significant emphasis for students to practice the skills. Additionally, the students may have thought the Elluminate sessions would “expose” their level of practice and understanding if they were not able to demonstrate the skills. This may have affected their concentration regarding content and skill development.

In Kelly’s (2007) guide for teachers of communication skills, a framework for assessing communication skills is suggested. At the base of the pyramid is knowledge. This might involve a pen and paper test to assess the student’s understanding of the concepts. Level 2 is the “knows how” or knowledge in context. Student’s might be given a video and asked to offer an appropriate response. Level 3 suggests the performance in vivo using an objective structured exam, and level 4 suggests student demonstrates their ability to use the skills in a live or simulated situation. This practical guide incorporates a similar design/structure that I provided in the fall and winter online class.

Despite the mixed-results from the pre- and post- test scores, student comments as well as grades on their final recordings suggest the development of interpersonal skill can be developed in an online environment.

**Teaching Skills Online**

It is imperative that the discussion does not end here. Teaching helping skills in an online environment is the third domain outlined in this study. Using a reflective model of my teaching, I examined my teaching practices weekly and considered opportunities to improve my teaching to students as result of these reflections. My reflective journals often focused on how to improve the delivery of material to assist students in understanding the material. There
were also numerous reflections on how to be clear and concise in my teaching. One primary theme was indecisiveness. I believe the reason indecisiveness arose as a theme in my reflections was due to my uncertainty in using some of the technology platforms in this course. My self-imposed attitude about needing to be the expert on all things was difficult for me to overcome while teaching this course. I attempted to embrace an attitude of tolerance and transparency with students and myself. When I was not skilled using a new type of technology I attempted to tell students that I too was learning and shared my apprehension about the new format for teaching. I found this refreshing and I believe the students gravitated toward me recognizing that I too needed new skills to deliver the course content. I did not need to be an expert on technology but I did need to model the process of discovery. Allowing myself to be transparent as I discovered new media, modeled the importance of lifelong learning. This also modeled my flexibility as an instructor. If something did not work the way I had expected, I uncovered another method to achieve the same outcome. Students’ comments reflected this important tension between structure and flexibility. In Chapter 4, I outlined two students’ comments expressing this topic. One student captured the challenges she faced in meeting the deadlines for assignments and the process of checking her email for ongoing announcements. Several other students commented about my flexibility as an instructor and how important this was for their learning experience. I recognized the importance of offering several synchronous sessions at varying days and times, including Saturday sessions. Because of this unique course, I developed an appreciation for these, at times, polarizing strategies. I was flexible when I needed to be yet the course was structured enough for planning and integrity. Without structure, students are not likely to engage in an online course. Students want to know what to
expect and make sure the workload is something they are likely to complete. Yet, I needed to be flexible when life happens. Deadlines for assignments were Sunday night. However, I recognize that computers crash, Blackboard moves slowly and assignments fail to upload. This balance was important for personal integrity and course integrity.

In my reflections on lesson learned, I discovered four overarching themes. These broad themes capture varying insights that emerged while developing and teaching this online course. One reflected pattern that emerged highlights the relevance of workbook assignments. Dr. Carkhuff’s training manual and the student workbook offers assignments where students and teachers process the assignment in a traditional face to face class. Many of the assignments were helpful in increasing students’ understanding of the material, but other assignments felt like busy-work for the students. This inference was based on the questions students asked in the online forum as well as the emails with questions. Because I was not always successful in working each workbook assignment into the online assignment I believe students thought some of the workbook assignments were busy work. It is not until the completion of the course was they successful in linking those assignments with the outcomes or final recording where they demonstrated the skills they had developed. Understanding this I can appreciate the need decision for faculty and instructors to work with publishers in developing online material for classes where there is an interactive component. The assignments are then more likely to be integrated and not feel like busy work for the students. Additionally, the fact that students gave the correct responses to the pre-test case study for knowledge was reflective of the problems with converting a face-to-face course to an online environment. Many of these
workbooks are designed to be used in class, with the instructor setting the pace and processing the assignment immediately upon completion.

The feedback from the students as well as enrollment patterns suggests the synchronous content was important for the development of their helping skills. Although we discussed the concepts through assignments and discussion board forums, it was not until we practiced the skills that students’ understood the complexities of the skills. When students asked what they did to prepare to attend they made of list of how they kept themselves organized. They equated staying on top of all their commitments as being present. When I opened the Elluminate session and provided students with an image of a garbage can and then asked them to mentally place all the things that could distract them from this learning experience in the garbage they began to understand the concept of attending. Students began typing away all their distractions in the chat box. I then asked them to give me a verbal commitment that when those distractions began to creep back into their focus they would develop a mantra or method for keeping those distractions at bay.

Students’ willingness to attend and participate in this type of synchronous course suggests that students are eager and anxious to learn and practice the skills particularly when they can apply these skills both personally and professionally. Twenty-three students reported they had developed interpersonal helping skills as a result of this course. More than half of the class commented on how they were currently communicating more positively with loved ones or listening more closely in their other classes a result of this course.

The results also suggest that although students prefer the freedom the online classroom provides, they are willing to engage more intimately if they perceive a benefit from their end.
In other words, many of these students have pre-determined they can learn the material in the online course through readings, postings and assignments. In order for them to participate in a learning activity that crosses over into their personal time, the session must legitimately require real time exposure. Based on the feedback, the actual practice sessions and the attendance trends, students clearly found the synchronous sessions a necessary tool for developing the interpersonal helping skills. I will continue discussing the results of this study as I related the findings with current literature.

Discussion

Because of my proficiency in using the skills outlined in Carkhuff's model, getting students to pay attention and engage in course material is one of my strengths. The first week of class I ask students to attach a word document that includes their educational biographies. I allow them to emphasize the highlights and struggles throughout their years of education. I offer my educational biography as an example and share the ups and downs I experienced and the values my parents placed on education. The educational biography is posted to a discussion board where students read each other's biographies. Then, they comment or offer feedback. This first assignment encourages involvement from the students and they inevitably become linked with other students who have similar experiences. Students acknowledge each other and the multitude of roles many of the students have. They recognize their own personal strengths and how those strengths were instrumental in assisting them in getting to this class. I comment on each biography and respond to any student who posts on my forum. I find this exercise pulls me into the community of learners and I want the students to see me as a participant as well as the facilitator.
In my reflections, I recognize my ambivalence about the workbook and the relevance to larger course goals. Although I am confident in the steps Dr. Carkhuff designed for learners to acquire the skills, the work itself can feel tedious and non-relevant for students. I also recognize my natural gravitation to more dynamic online experiences to keep students engaged as I am laying the groundwork for the development of the skills. During this scaling process that establishes the foundation for skill development, I must still engage students and retain their interest so they can observe the modeling of the skills and then demonstrate the skills. The structure provided by the workbook was designed for a face-to-face class. My use of the workbook may need to be reconsidered as I continue to transitioning this course material for one that meets online.

Brinthaupt et al. (2011), outline characteristics for teachers in an online environment. These characteristics emulate Bain’s (2004) categories of What the Best Teachers Do. Additionally, these teaching strategies align with the Quality Matters framework (Puzziferro & Shelton, 2007) and suggesting the instruction follow a set of “Good Practices”. The first category is fostering student engagement. One of the practices involves using active learning techniques. The second category focuses on the intellectual development which suggests the importance of generating provocative acts, questions, and statements. I would like to think that because the student’s were motivated when they entered the course the stimulating learning environment facilitated the learning of the course content and skills.

The third category identified as necessary for teaching online involves building rapport with students. I align this with the first category regarding student engagement. Having a relationship with the students despite the distance is necessary for student success. I believe
this category is directed to an even more intimate relationship with students. Being flexible with deadline dates and individualized feedback on assignments are suggested activities in this category. Because the helping profession(s) are based on relationships, this area is significant for several reasons. First, these are the very skills I am hoping many students will observe and copy. My online video at orientation explains my teaching philosophy as well as my personal story. Students have the opportunity to experience my passion about my teaching and my discipline through my behavior and my online presence. Building rapport with students is a natural part of my course development and teaching philosophy. As a result I believe this is one reason students are able to successfully develop the counseling skills in this course.

In Chapter 2, I discussed and emphasized the importance of teaching skills through modeling and feedback. The significance of modeling and feedback was supported throughout the interdisciplinary research on interpersonal skill development. On the satisfaction survey seven students commented on learning to use Elluminate. This was themed in the technology category. Students consistently expressed a sense of accomplishment with successfully participating in this new format. All but one of the comments were favorable regarding the use and integration of this tool that I used to model the skills in real time and offer students the opportunity to practice. Because I was present with a microphone I was able to offer immediate feedback. This experience alone provided the format to integrate all three domains in Brinthaupt et. al (2011), discussion on What the Best Online Teachers Do. Because Elluminate is a tool that brings students together in real time, there is opportunity for modeling new skills, dynamic interactions, and individualized attention.
I also want to tease out some areas from my reflective journals that were challenging to theme. These areas are primarily circumventing some of the more abstract concepts discussed in this course. Having completed the course once I was able to anticipate some challenges with these areas but I had not anticipated these challenges. Concepts such as congruency and inference seemed to trip the students. Despite the book’s explanation and my audio recorded discussion on the topic, students did not understand the application of these concepts until I explained them in real-time through Elluminate. In the fall class, this was after they had been tested on these concepts. Another area was cost. Students needed reliable computers and recording devices. As an instructor I am try to be respectful of the student’s limited resources. However, it is necessary for students to have reliable equipment for online courses. This seems obvious but there were numerous problems with computers.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of this study that must be discussed to be cautious about interpretations and application of this study. The first limitation involves the pre-post-test format. Because Dr. Carkhuff’s Training Manual and student workbook were integrated with only minor changes, the measurement for pre-post testing was not altered except for the change of pre-test knowledge in the winter quarter class. Using only one case study for the pre- and post-test knowledge measurement reduces the probability that students will be successfully demonstrate the knowledge or skills learned in the course. The criterion-referenced test is not comparing students’ scores to one another but the students’ ability to acquire the skills along a continuum. Had students been given several case studies and then
averaged the results for each student the average of the scores may have been a stronger indicator of the knowledge and skills acquired in the course.

Because this study was never intended to be replicated to a wide range of individuals, I did not work with the publisher on transforming the workbook material for online content. It was used without much alteration. Along the same lines the study only assessed the first two skills, attending and responding, introduced by Dr. Carkhuff. Personalizing and Initiating are the remaining skills in the Carkhuff model that are introduced and developed during the second quarter of this course.

This study was designed to inform the helping professions in the area of undergraduate skill development in an online environment and to explore the teaching experience from a novice online instructor. The results have informed my teaching and I have already changed my online courses using knowledge generated from this study. I no longer use the workbook as my guide for student assignments. I also am slowly acquiring a library of simulated client statements to assist in developing responding skills.

Because the sample was limited to those students who enrolled in the course, the individual make-up of students who self-select into an online course may be different than those students who choose to participate in a traditional face-to-face course. This population was Caucasian, primarily female, non-traditional student, with previous online learning experience.

**Future Studies**

From the very beginning of my interest in this topic, I have been surprised by the number of studies devoted to the online teaching environment and crossing over into offering more interactive online experiences for students. I anticipate this trend will continue as the demand
for a more dynamic, interactive online learning experience will be expected. Teachers are using technology to supplement traditional face-to-face classrooms as there is a greater demand to achieve program learning outcomes as well as increase student retention. I also believe it is reflective of quality media recognized to both engage students and stimulate learning.

With the increasing use of tablets for everyday activities, student’s access to webcasts, podcasts, and LMS will continue to be increased. Most smart phones and tablets have recording capacities that will allow for students to record small group work as well as other interactive sessions. This allows instructors to work with small groups of students while other groups are working on another assignment or practicing skills. The instructor could ask to review the recordings and offer feedback to the students in that particular group. These recordings can be uploaded to the LMS and the entire class can benefit from the feedback to the small group. I hope more studies will integrate technology use by faculty and student retention.

I think this study is foundational and naturally lends itself to a long-term study assessing the development of helping skills where students are taught new skills every year that build on previously developed skills. In Chapter 2, I discussed the studies that suggested Carkhuff’s HRT model was useful in developing foundational helping skills and Ivy’s Micro-skills training. I think it would be important to evaluate the skill level for students who receive skill training throughout their undergraduate course work, using Carkhuff’s model as well as their graduate coursework, using Ivy’s Micro-skills training. This study may serve to be the impetus for introducing evidenced based practices for counseling in the graduate courses if students already acquired the foundational skills.
I also think it would be meaningful to evaluate interpersonal helping skills in an online environment where a course developer assisted with the design and the content. Using standardized patients, clients, or actors who portray clients presenting with problems that allow the students to respond to the statements from the recording. Students would then be responding to the same statements and they could consider which statement best reflected the client’s experience.

**Implications for Teaching**

When I discuss this study with interested individuals they immediately ask me to project the outcome of the study as if the numbers provide the definitive answer to the question. I caution the interested individuals that I believe skills can be developed online but I am not sure that course instructors would embrace the transformation of the course material. And why should they? If we still have brick and mortar classrooms then we can ask students to attend a face-to-face class when necessary. The problem is that many schools have completely transferred their programs entirely online.

As instructors many of us carry binders or course materials that we copy prior to the beginning of class so we may share this with students. For online instruction we must begin collecting our web resources in a similar manner. Having an electronic folder for online ice-breaker exercises that engage students is necessary. Quite often, I have a student in more than one online course, and it is necessary to change these exercises to refresh course content to enliven the experience for the student. Maintaining online content that links students to news clips where interactive exchanges assist in facilitating learning objectives must also be collected. Finally, I worked with the instructor on my campus to develop several simulated client
situations that were done with high quality media and save in a format that could be easily uploaded to the LMS.

This instructor had several students who needed a project for their capstone course and my graduating students worked with the multi-media students to develop these simulated client statements. This provided me with content that did not rely on written workbook assignments or links that may go dead prior to my next online course.

Many disciplines or areas of studies have developed knowledge and skill competencies to guide in performance assessment. When skill based assessments or interpersonal engagement skills must be demonstrated the assessment of these skills can be completed online without giving a pen and paper test or rely on student self-report.

Not only do online programs need to assure accurate assessment of content areas but faculty need to provide clear rubrics for scoring subjective content such as responding skills. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, Carkhuff’s HRT model is extensively researched as is Ivy’s Microskills training. Undergraduate programs should seriously consider aligning curriculum to support ongoing skill development so academia can do their part in closing the gap between students’ performance when they are introduced to the workforce and the demands of the field.

Teaching online requires skills such as (1) organization, (2) planning, and (3) involvement. Additionally, it requires faculty to recognize the different types of learners and provide information for students in more than one platform. Most instructions, particularly those involving multiple steps, should be given both written and using audio recording devices.

Finally, the practice of documenting my teaching experience weekly as a new instructor was suggested through an article I read in a teaching newsletter. I remember thinking this was a
wonderful idea and also recognizing I would not engage in the practice because I was not that disciplined with my time. This action research study provided me the opportunities to not only begin the process of documenting my experience in the classroom but learning how to make meaning in what I have written.

Helping skills can be developed in an online environment if the course designer, instructor and students are willing to do the work. The learning curve is more substantial than online content-based courses because of the technology requirements. Additionally, synchronous learning should be integrated in courses with learning objectives that require modeling and feedback. The students not only understood content they did not previously understand, but they gained confidence in learning new technology.

I will continue to develop and teach online courses although I will not shift entirely to online courses. I orient my first year, face-to-face students the first week of class, to the learning opportunities in Blackboard. They understand that class will never be cancelled because of weather and we will move the material online. This gradual integration to the online environment allows many of my students to overcome their fear of technology based systems and slowly learn how to be successful in more than one learning environment.

Interpersonal helping skills are the foundation of the helping relationship. These skills are best acquired through modeling, practice, and feedback. Therefore, instruction must integrate these teaching methods. The data collected in this study suggests that helping skills can be acquired in an online environment when faculty members are willing to take the steps necessary to integrate technology that facilitates a dynamic learning opportunity for real time modeling, practice and feedback.
References


## Appendices

### Appendix A. Learning Objectives and Reflective Journal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Online</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners will measure their current ability to communicate and discriminate helping responses</td>
<td>Instructions are provided using an audio power point for students to complete the pre-tests assignment and return through the LMS. Students were sent an announcement through the LMS directing them to the orientation tab. Upon opening the tab they were directed to begin in the first folder and follow the instructions.</td>
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**Reflection:**

11A-Students were successful in completing the pre test for knowledge and skill. No questions were asked. I recognize the importance for students to feel connected to me as well as other students in the class. The educational biography facilitated the process of class members learning to interact with one another. Some students did not follow the instructions about uploading a word document. I will need to clarify my expectations and offer more specific instructions about when to upload a document and when to post directly on the discussion board. I recognize that I struggle with this detail at the beginning of class. I want the students to feel connected but I also want to set the parameters in areas that require structure. My level was an 8. This based on the fact that students did not ask questions. Because students were able to complete this learning objective in week 1, I feel more confident regarding the post-test in week 9. As I graded the pre-test, I realize that the answer to the pretest were actually in the student workbook. Since I am using these scores for my data elements I will need to use another example in the winter quarter to determine their actual baseline knowledge.

During the winter break I participated in a brief session on developing an orientation for online classes. This orientation was helpful to assist students in uploading papers and accessing various documents on blackboard.

I felt positive about the fact that I provided an online orientation to this class. It has been suggested to give students a quiz over the syllabus and I never integrated this into my orientation for online courses. I am so glad I integrated this requirement. It let me know what they did not understand or what information they skimmed over without reading carefully. I was able to follow up in my announcement to the students.

Learners will draw, label and discuss the Carkhuff Helping model including the helper and... | Online Assignment Instructions: Welcome to our first full week of classes! You will want to get started by reading your textbook The Art of Helping pp. 1-39, and completing the worksheets on pages 8... |
| helpee contributions | & 9. You will then want to listen to the audio power point that is uploaded in this file. The audio PP will offer a brief overview of the content discussed in the textbook, and it will assist you in understanding the helper and helpee roles in a helping relationship.

Your assignments are designed to help you explore your current understanding of how people learn and grow as well as what professional helpers do to assist others in learning and growing as well.

Once you complete the readings and workbook you will find 3 recordings inside this folder. You will need to view each video and make a list of behaviors that you observe the helper or interviewer doing in each video. Then decide whether you consider these to be helpful to the person they are interviewing or not. For example you may notice that one of the interviews continually nods their head while the other person is speaking. Someone may believe this helps engage the helpee or person being interviewed and others may find it distracting. You will hand in a paper through this folder that captures you ideas of behaviors that are helpful when helping others grow and/or explore.

Secondly, you will post on the discussion board two areas that you would like to work on while you are in this class. These should come from your topic matrix that you completed in your workbook. As you discuss your topics you will want to talk about the important relationships that are in place to help you overcome this challenge. |
| Reflection | Because I was able to record my voice along with the PP I felt positive regarding the students ability to understand the inter- and intra- personal processing. I would rate this learning objective as a 7. This is such a broad overview and most students do not have a lot of comments on this section. I think in order to have this go higher I will need to find a way to have students document their thoughts, feelings and behaviors in a few situations. This may assist in helping students understanding simple cognitive and behavioral processes. In both sections I received emails about students wanting to know about their workbook exercises. They are asked to complete assignments that I do not have them upload through the LMS for me to grade. I understand by week 6 or 7 who has not read the book or completed the exercises because they make the mistakes the workbook assists them in avoiding. Even though I discuss the importance of completing the workbook exercises I realize that some students will do the least amount of work in order to pass the course. I also need to remember they type of student who is enrolled in this class. They are busy, deliberate and practical. How can I make these assignments feel more relevant? I will continue to find ways to make the workbook relevant without |
having them turn in all the worksheets. The workbook feels like busy work and students have difficulty, initially, understanding the purpose of the exercises. If the publisher of the book offered an online companion this would be useful in overcoming the challenges with copyright issues. This may be the most helpful option going forward.

Another area for improvement is how to offer examples on the discussion board without students copying my format/example. This course is as much about process as it is outcome but they are programmed to give the "right" response so they end up copying my example with the expectation of getting a grade of an A. As time progresses in the course I find that students are better able to articulate what I am asking but early on in the quarter they do not want to deviate from my example. I also think that having a rubric for grading online postings will be necessary in the future. I recognize that I am ambivalent about this because of the extra work and rigor involved. Isn't that exactly what I am assessing in their recordings? Structure in something that appears to others as very subjective? I am able to reliably score the recordings, why do I question myself about scoring online posts? I will need to continually re-evaluate the workload for myself and the student as I teach online. My challenge here is the same challenge I am presenting in the dissertation. The value of structure/quantitative frameworks as they align or not with individualized/process orientated frameworks. Both are valuable and important but students and faculty seem to gravitate toward one or the others. How do we teach tolerance with having both?

In the second online course I was able to offer other students’ examples to help them see the diverse responses. I also openly discussed the homework assignments and my expectations. In the second week the question came up about turning in workbook assignments. This is how I responded:

Students name, thank you for asking this question! You do not need to turn the workbook assignments in unless I specifically ask for them. I teach classes with a basic understanding that students will read the assigned material and complete the assigned workbook pages. If these are not completed students generally have problems as they practice and demonstrate the particular skills.

When students struggle with understanding content I sent them back to reread some of the practice exercises. I offered to review them once they were completed. Because several students commented specifically about parroting or elongating response, I see they have begun to use some of the practice exercises in evaluating their own responses. It may be possible to have them pair up and share their workbook assignments with other students.
| Learners will understand what is involved in attending to others and the importance of attending Learners will tell and show how to prepare others, oneself, and the physical space for a helping session | This week we begin to explore helping behaviors. In the Helping Model the Helper attends to involve (engage) the helpee. You need to begin by reading pp. 41 - 58 in the Art of Helping. Then complete workbook pp 13-24. You will also want to listen to my audio PP that covers attending skills. This week’s assignment: You will keep a journal of your attending behavior (see specifics on this assignment in this folder). You will upload your typed journal through the link in this folder by Sunday 10/10 at midnight. You will post by Friday at midnight on the DB for this week’s assignment and respond to at least 5 others posts by Sunday at midnight. |
| Reflection: | Students were asked to keep a journal of their attending behavior and write about it on the discussion board. They were also asked to hand in a journal where they track their attending behavior for the week. I provided an example, and I thought this would assist students in helping them understand what I was looking for them to document. I rate my comfort with this exercise at a 5. What I need to do going forward is give students clearer instructions on what constitutes a week. I also need to recognize that they many not all log onto the site on Monday so they may not begin the assignment until mid-week. I need to change my expectations for this assignment or change the dates that we discuss the outcome of their journals. I also need to emphasize the purpose of this assignment – what it is they did to prepare themselves to attend. Students seem to talk about what they are doing to be organized. Maybe I need to highlight the link between being organized and being successful at attending. I will consider Jill Bolte’s presentation on the left brain and the right brain. It highlights what we must do to be in the here and now. I need to give more specific instructions and outline the purpose of the journal and not just about listing all their activities. Many of us who are busy are organized. That does not mean we don’t text and drive or surf the net while eating dinner with our family. Attending is about being present. I am able to model this through Elluminate but I am not sure how to make this more relevant at this point in the class. Should I see this week as planting seeds and we later develop this concept? Maybe, I need to back into this one. If attending is an abstract concept then I might think about asking students to keep a note pad with them and every time they have a specific task or activity they need to write down the activity and any distractions that presented itself to them during this time that prevented them from engaging fully in this activity. Maybe if they understand when they are distracted, it will assist them in |
understanding when they are successful at attending (engaging) fully. Starting off with having them become more aware may be the first step and then focusing on how to eliminate distractions is the natural second step.

Later reflection: Students who participated in Elluminate seemed to understand attending and being present when I displayed a garbage can and asked them to place all their distractions in the can. I did this by granting them moderator privileges and having them write on the white board. They wrote things like, my hunger, baby, husband, barking dogs, the television, shopping online, my messy house, other homework etc. These statements allowed me to believe they understood these distractions prevented them from being present. In my next class I think I will provide students with a garbage can cut-out white board and ask them to put all the things that are preventing them from being in the here and now inside the can by writing them down. They can use this each time they go into a new learning/helping situation.

As a student and a professional I believe this is a great way to introduce students to mindfulness and the practice of being present in all areas of their life. I was very excited by the number of comments regarding being present.

| Learners will demonstrate physical attending skills, squaring, leaning, and making eye contact | This week we are going to play with digital media! To begin with you need to complete exercise 11 in your workbook. Review the example on p. 25. Then observe 3 situations as described in the exercises. You will need to type and upload this exercise through the link in this folder NLT Sunday 10/16 at midnight.

Next I want you to begin playing with a camera that will allow you to upload videos to your computer. I have one or two flip cameras if you need to borrow one (48 hour turnaround time). I want you to begin recording yourself with someone else as if you are in a helping situation. Then you need to go back and review your recording. You will write a paragraph about how well you attended to this person. This is not expected to be more than just a chat between two friends or a family member. I want you to get use to looking at yourself on camera and hearing your digital voice. You will submit this your reflection along with exercise 11 NLT Sunday at midnight.

Finally, we are going to begin using Elluminate. There will be a handful of live sessions over the next few weeks so I can demonstrate skills and offer meaningful feedback as we go forward in this class. This week’s live sessions are as follows:

Thursday October 13 at 2:00 and Friday October 14 at 6:00 |
| Students who attend one entire session will receive the allotted points. If you are unable to attend either of the sessions you can listen to a recorded session and write a paper about your learning experience to receive the points. You will need a headset with a microphone to participate. I will also ask students to sign up ahead of time so I know how many to expect in each session. |
| Reflection: The workbook assignment did not translate well to the online classroom. Most students just copied the examples in the workbook and offered some behavioral terms. I am not convinced they all actively participated in this observation exercise. I place this on a 4 or 5. I think going forward I will give them more specific instructions or create the situation so there is some continuity in what is being observed. I also need to consider how much of an emphasis I am placing on the assignments. I am offering very little individual feedback when I grade the assignments. Most are just relieved for completeness. If I want students to put more value on these assignments than maybe I need to spend more time grading them. In the winter quarter I provided a you-tube video that discussed non-verbal behavior. Then I asked them to complete the same exercise. It went much smoother. I believe this took place because I delayed this for one week and broke this assignment down for students. In this week I asked student to listen to a video on “How to tell when a person is lying.” The brief news clip demonstrates very specific behaviors that we are able to discuss and document. This seemed to be more meaningful for students in understanding non-verbal behavior. I also think the assignment was more clear and concrete. The person interviewed was very descriptive when he discussed specific behaviors such as A person looking up when asked a question or They shift in their seat. This assists the students in being specific and clear when looking for non-verbal behaviors. Students observed behaviors and documented these observations. I was able to give feedback on a documented behavior that was actually an inference. I did this by downloading the document, inserting a comment about why the statement was an inference and not an observation. When I went through the entire document I saved it an uploaded it so they were able to see my comments. This time I would rate my ability to accomplish the LO as a 7 or 8. The second part of this was the practice session with Elluminate. The first quarter I offered this session I was very nervous. I made several mistakes and the first one was that I did not provide a link for students to access the Elluminate session. So I sent an email hoping those who were trying to enter the session would be |
successful at joining the session. The second mistake I made was I forgot to record the session. Because I did not record it I did not have a record of attendance. There were only 4 students present so I was able to recall this but it would have been a major problem if more students had attended. Other issues were I had been playing with my screen and I assumed that students were seeing what I was seeing. I learned to ask students about what they were seeing on their screen. I would rate this first round as a 5 or 6. I am ok with this. Just as the students are learning new skills I too felt this was a learning opportunity for me. Moving forward I will remember these obstacles and hopefully provide a meaningful experience for students.

In order to improve my overall experience on Elluminate I will need to do the following:
Think through the types of questions I will ask students and use more polling questions. I can do this to demonstrate accurate empathy.
Upload recordings that I want them to see at the beginning of the session so we are not waiting based on a person's connection speed.
Talk with Elluminate support to see if there is a way for me to access a student view. This way will understand more clearly what they are viewing.
Provide Elluminate dates at the beginning of the quarter and establish clear expectations about attendance.

In the winter quarter I felt I was able to anticipate some of the problems that I encountered the first quarter. I remembered to record the session and upload links. The new challenge was that BB 9.1 was introduced and there needed to be a patch for students to access Elluminate because the link does not work. I was able to provide students with written instructions on how to access the session manually. Students appeared engaged and as a result I actually had 10 students in one session during week 6 of the winter quarter.

My next challenge is how to offer points on these sessions.
Students who work and cannot make the session should not be penalized however, I feel strongly about students participating in the sessions and it makes a huge difference in the development of the skills. I will need to continue to find ways to be fair yet firm as it relates to these sessions.

The learning objective for the students and the recording went poorly the first quarter and more smoothly the second quarter. I would rate this as a 5 the first quarter. I need to improve my instructions when communicating my expectations to the
students. I believe this translated better in the winter quarter. Students were successful at uploading recordings to themselves and problem solved some of the technology issues that students did not bring up to me the first quarter. Having them upload the assignment and send it to themselves was helpful in letting them learn more about how they would do this when their recording was due. I rated myself as a 6 during the winter quarter. There are so many opportunities in using Elluminate and the most important aspects are to continue practicing and to find a way to work in a common time for students so they can benefit from this learning experience. Going forward I will have dates posted and make the requirements clear about these sessions.

| Learners will demonstrate observations skills. | This week we are focusing on observations. You will need to read pp. 59 - 66 in the Art of Helping. Then you should complete exercises 12, 13 and 14 in your workbook. In exercise 14 you will use the 3 video links in this folder to record your observations. Situation 1 is the first video and there are 3 singers in this video. Pick one of the 3 singers in the first video to complete this exercise on. Video 2 has one primary speaker as does video 3. You will need to type your observation responses and upload these through this link by Sunday at midnight.

Then you should read the chapter Cultural Differences, this can be found under Course Documents and respond to the discussion board regarding what you learned from this chapter as well as a stereotype you have believed that has later been dispelled.

Next, you need to listen to my brief recording on the difference between an observation and an inference. |
| Differentiating between and observation and an inference | |

| Reflection | In the traditional face-to-face classroom we would complete these exercises together. I would review the Power Point that outlines the material we are discussing. Next I would offer a number of examples. Then I would show a video clip and ask students to make a list of observations they made while viewing the clip. Through our discussion I would highlight the difference between an observation and an inference. Once I determined they understood the difference I would send them off to observe other students, faculty or staff at the college and complete exercise 14 in their workbook. When they returned to the classroom we would process what they observed and the inference attached to the observation. Through this process I would continue to offer clarity as many students confuse an observation and an inference. Next we would have a discussion regarding stereotypes and how often our inferences are based on stereotypes instead of actual observations. This discussion often leads to students becoming quiet and processing some of these experiences internally. |
In the online environment I am amazed at the discussions students have regarding their own personal stereotypes. We spend an entire week discussing this topic and it is refreshing to witness student's openly exploring their beliefs and understanding of others' culture. I have found the discussion forum to be rich and full of ideas that are not always openly discussed. The videos I ask students to observe and then make a list of observations and inferences are relatively short. The first video is from you-tube and there are what would appear to be 3 religious songs. If you listen to the beginning of the songs and then you observe how the singers are behaving one would infer the message is faith based. However, the songs are making fun of people who dress up for church and sing the songs but fail to engage in the message. The second video is of a 10 year old talking to an auditorium full of adults. She speaks at the level of a mature 25-year old professional. Students make clear observations and their inferences are often based on stereotypes. The final recoding is a music video of Phil Collins singing "I don't care anymore." He begins his song in a very calm and cool manner singing "I don't care anymore." He is somewhat believable. However, by the end of the music video he is yelling the words "I don't care anymore with arms flailing and his tone is anything but indifference. He appears emotionally hurt by another's actions and he cares very deeply about something or someone he lost. As I read students assignments they often miss the piece on congruence and when I download their papers I ask a series of questions about believability. I want students to be clear on when they document behaviors or signs and symptoms and understand when they are acting on an observation and an inference. This meant I needed to have more than one medium in which to deliver online material.

I rated this as a 5 or 6. Overall the students were able to document the non-verbal behaviors. There were some observations that were actually inferences but was prepared to offer feedback about this. The more challenging piece was congruency. I needed to find a way to model my internal experience when I am conflicted. Although I covered the concept of congruency in the audio power-point, this is a challenging concept for many students to understand. I did not anticipate this to be so difficult.

In my winter quarter class I decided to speak to the challenges of understanding congruency from the previous quarter. I offered examples of how we determine believability based on congruence between the words spoken and the behavior in which they are spoken. Because this is a dynamic process, I used Elluminate to demonstrate the process of determining congruence. I did this by
downloaded pictures from our digital media collection. Then I made several statements. I asked student to make observations and inferences. I also asked them about low or high levels of congruency. Students seemed much clearer on this concept and it was reflected in their written test. I deemed this believability check and this discussion flowed naturally from video clip they reviewed earlier in the quarter.

It also flowed nicely into the next topic that involved stereotypes. Inferences are a natural partner to stereotyping groups of individuals.

Asking students to read the chapter on Cultural Differences was a safe assignment. However, It is difficult to teach empathy unless students consider their beliefs and begin to recognize when their inferences are based on stereotypes. The first part of the assignment was straight-forward. Post what you have learned as a result of reading the chapter. The problem with such an open assignment such as this is that students who choose not to read the assignment can use others words for their post. When I anticipate this is the case I will often ask questions to encourage them to read. The second part of this asks them to consider a stereotype they have spent a significant amount of time believing and what they do with this.

In my first class students seemed to mostly reflect on the dating rituals in Russia. On the second part of this assignment I believe the students were pretty open as to the stereotypes they owned and were they came from. I rated this as 7 out of 10. I did not change anything except I asked students to be creative and avoid repeating what another student had already posted regarding the chapter.

I am not clear where I will go with this from a performance improvement standpoint. Students who post their comments at the very end often fail to be original. It leaves the instructor wondering whether they just copied others or did they actually read the material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learners will demonstrate listening skills</th>
<th>This week we have several activities but the most important piece is the live sessions. I will host two Elluminate sessions where we have a chance to practice listening skills. We will have breakout rooms and we will have round robin sessions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please listen to my audio PP presentation. I am reviewing the skill of listening as well as discussing common distractions to active listening. Then listen to a brief podcast that supports much of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
what I have stated

Then you should read pp. 67 - 81 in the Art of Helping. You will complete exercise 15 and 16 in your workbook. Exercise 16 will actually be completed in our live sessions. I have scheduled Elluminate for 2 times this week. You should plan to attend at least one. The sessions are scheduled for: Wednesday 10/26 @ 4:15 and Thursday 10/27 @ 7pm

Next you will network with individuals in the class to have another practice session. You need to record your practice session and upload it to BB. You will notice several tools under web resources where you may practice and record sessions. You can use your cell phones but you will need to convert you file to an mp3 or mp4 file before you upload. Each student who participates should attach a document and discuss their listening skills. See the attached document in this folder.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because of the non-threatening nature of the first Elluminate session more students were present at this week’s Elluminate session. I anticipate students were able to get over their fear regarding these live sessions. My rating of the delivery of this week’s assignment was a six out of ten. Several pieces worked very well in helping students develop their listening skills. Other pieces of this week’s assignment fell short.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is the second place where students push back or offer resistance. They want to interact with other student online but not in real time. When I insist they practice listening with another student and not a family member then they seem to want to challenge this request. As I use the word they I am cognizant of the reality. It is a small few that truly resist. In my first class one student began texting other students in the online session about getting together for this assignment. Because I lack the ability to multi-task (read a chat box and teach at the same time) I was so excited that I thought I would burst. The same thing happened in my second class. Students began to problem solve who they would meet with and at what times. They began to text me about space but I was actually trying to teach a skill. I recognize that I do not multitask very well!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As I reflect on this I seem to feel confident in a f2fclassroom where students ask questions off topic and I pull up chair and ask for a volunteer and model the skill. Several students did this exercise with family members but I did not deduct points. Those that actually met with other students seemed to appreciate meeting classmates and giving and receiving feedback. Several students commented on how this allowed them to feel connected to classmates. Once they got over this initial resistance they seemed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to feel even more connected to their classmates. If believe the round robin sessions will need to be developed and supported online through Elluminate. I will need to learn how to facilitate the small group sessions and record the sessions so I can monitor their skills.

I recognize how important social connections and immediate feedback are not just for the students but also for me as I teach. When I use Elluminate with the students I experience a connection that is powerful. Although I can experience something similar on the discussion board it is not as intense. Although society often labels the youth as unable to delay gratification I must say that I too appreciate the immediacy of understanding a student's grasp on the material. When several students are struggling with the same concept I know exactly where to go back and break things down (while in real time). In the online classroom I can give students feedback on their homework and I may or may not know where that understanding fell apart for them or others.

| Learners will tell what is involved in formulating and communicating responses that are empathic to another person’s experience. | This week we will move into our second skill set. Responding. You should read pp. 83 - 87 in the Art of Helping. Then complete exercise 17 in your workbook. Your response to exercise 17 should be posted on the discussion board.

You will listen to my audio PP as well as the brief podcast. You will need to complete the attached worksheet and upload the worksheet as part of this week's assignment.

Finally, you will take a test. Your test has two parts. You will have a timed, multiple-choice test. The second part will be fill in the blank. This part is not timed.

Next week you will complete your first recording. More instructions will follow. |
| Reflection | This week I introduced students to responding skills. This included the format for responding to meaning (level 3). I offered an audio power point where I explained the Carkhuff model and the difference between responding to content, feeling and meaning. Then I asked students to complete a worksheet in their workbook.

This is the assignment students were asked to complete: Here is your assignment: I want you to intentionally place yourself in a situation where your views or ideas are opposed to someone else. This may be at school, work, or in your community. When possible I want you to engage in a conversation with someone and you may not give your opinion or ideas. You may only paraphrase what you heard the other person say. Then I want you to come back and write about it. What was that like for you? Were you successful at listening and reflecting a non- |
The purpose of this assignment was to allow students to offer basic reflective statement to demonstrate understanding however, they were not allowed to offer advice or judge someone else's actions or expressions.

This assignment was a 9 out of 10 and I did not change a thing for the second quarter. Students came back to the class and told about deeply personal issues they simply listened to and how difficult it was for them to only reflect what they had heard. They expressed how shocked they were by how little they actually listened to others and this exercise really forced them to engage through listening not speaking. I have attempted this exercise in a F2F class and it does not carry the same weight. This was a transformative exercise in the course because it demonstrated the importance of listening skills and the level of trust and intimacy the students had developed.

Assessing student learning up to this point in the quarter was challenging. I used a worksheet from the workbook that asked students to observe a video and document observations about appearance, age, and a number of other items. Then it asked the student to make inferences regarding mood and congruence. This worked well although the recordings were flawed and it becomes clear who does and does not understand congruence. At times I began to wonder if a few students were reading my feedback on homework assignments. It also reminded me how important it is to offer timely feedback on homework assignments. I also asked students to document what the helper did and did not do in regards to attending behavior. Eighty five percent of the students correctly responded to these questions in both sections of the class. I think going forward I would want to record a session that is high quality and make sure students can observe both the helper and the helpee when answering test questions.

Learners will demonstrate their abilities to formulate and communicate accurate empathic responses to the content of another person’s expression

This week we learn the art of responding to content. This may otherwise be described as paraphrasing. It may seem like a simple task but students often struggle with this skill.

Begin by reading pp 88 - 91. Your workbook assignments are extensive. You will complete exercises 18 - 23 (pp. 42 - 54). It is really important that you work through these exercises. The first problem students generally have is their responses are too long. Next they will parrot what the helpee stated. Finally, they will often include judgment statements as part of the response. These exercises are important to help you avoid these response pitfalls.
I will upload a podcast where I model this skill. Next I expect you to partner with someone in the class to practice the skill. I will open Elluminate for anyone to practice the skills with me or each other. I have a session scheduled for Wednesday 11/9 at 7:30. I will record the session for those of you who are unable to attend.

Finally, you will upload your recording to blackboard by Sunday at midnight. The assignment may be found in this folder with the link to upload you mp3 or mp4 file.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During the first quarter I uploaded a brief counseling session and I asked students to type each helper response and indicate whether the responses were too long or parroting the helpee statement. I rate this as a 6 on my scale. The problem with this assignment was the students were not yet prepared to determine this level of helping. I needed to offer more opportunities for them to put this skill in context. They needed to observe me model and give feedback using this information before they could feel confident in their ability to indicate whether the helper was parroting. In the winter class I just asked them to complete the assignment in their workbook and upload this to blackboard. This worked much better although I felt pressure to squeeze in a large amount of material the final 3 weeks of the quarter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the first quarter I taught the course online students were asked to upload their recordings to the discussion board. Five students were successful with this assignment. A few students sent me their recordings through email. Two students brought their recordings to me on a jump drive. And one student just flat out did not complete the assignment. As a result of this challenging assignment I anticipated problems and I built in safeguards for this with the second course. I rated this as a 5 and I knew talking about technology was problematic. Students needed to actually record and upload their assignment. This is the only way they would know whether or not they had the ability to be successful at this task.

During week four and week six I asked students to record and upload sessions. I then asked them to email the recorded session to themselves and play the session to assure the file size was not too large. In week 7 students were asked to upload their first recording. Twelve students in the second class were successful uploading their recorded sessions or the link to their recording. Many of them also copied and pasted their transcript directly into the discussion board. Although I had not required them to do this I found this to be an amazing learning opportunity. I would listen to the recording and offer feedback directly onto their transcript for all to see. I view this as a huge success over the first quarter where only 5 students were successful. Eventually all the students except for one were successful at uploading their recording.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learners will demonstrate their abilities to formulate and communicate accurate feeling response to another person’s expression</th>
<th>Finally, we are getting to the good stuff! How are you feeling today! Let’s talk about feelings. Begin by reading your book the Art of Helping pp. 92 - 104. Next you will complete your workbook exercises 24 - 30. You will want to listen to my podcast to avoid the pitfalls with responding to feelings. You will want to upload exercise 29 for a graded assignment this week and you will want to participate in the Eluminate session(s). This is probably the most important week for practicing. I will model the skill then we will practice the responses. You will receive participation point for attending and participating in the sessions. The following times have been set aside for eluminate: Tuesday 4:00 - 5:00 and Thursday 7:00 - 8:00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Students completed the assignments and attended the eluminate sessions. One additional thing I offered in the second course that I had not previously done was offer a Saturday session. This session was well attended and I ended up offering 3 sessions during this week but I felt it was important to make the sessions available for all students. During the first quarter the students completed the workbook assignments and I did not have any major concerns. One of the assignments is to develop a feeling word vocabulary so they are not continually using the same feeling words. Students uploaded the new words and I noticed they did not use many of the new words. Therefore I rated this as a 6 or 7 out of 10. I wanted to find way that students would not only complete the feeling word vocabulary but also use the words. In the second class I posted the following assignment to the discussion board. Please use this forum to describe one or two situations where you introduced your new “feeling” word vocabulary to family and friends. Tell us the new “feeling” word you used and how it was received. How did you feel when you tried using this new word? I encourage all of you to eliminate good and bad from your feeling word vocabulary. You will want to write this forum after you have</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
completed exercise 27 in your workbook.

This exercise was well received. I had a mother with two teenage daughters describe her use of 3 new positive feeling words and her daughters looked at her as if she had 3 heads. Other students shared similar stories. What was fascinating was that students enjoyed the exercise and they expressed an interest in increasing their use of a variety of feeling words. I am not sure I will change this exercise and I rate the application at a 9 on a scale of 10.

| Learners will demonstrate their abilities to formulate and communicate accurate empathic responses to the meaning (content and feeling) of another person's expression | This is where we pull it all together!! Former students have told me that when they leave class they practice their *Jill Skills!* This is in reference to the *You feel_________ Because________________* template we use to practice a combined statement using the response to content and the response to feeling. This brings us to the level 3 we introduced the first week of class.

You will begin by reading pp. 105 - 118 in The Art of Helping. You will complete exercise 31 - 35 in your workbook. Elluminate will be open for practice and feedback from me on 11/22 at 5 p.m.

Exercise 35 will be altered and there are two recordings that are uploaded in this folder. You need to listen to the recordings and identify at least two interchangeable responses that the helper made (one from each recording) then write your own interchangeable response to each helpee in the recording.

These should be uploaded through this folder NLT Sunday at midnight.

You will also complete your post tests this week. During week one you completed a pre-test for knowledge and skills. This week you will take a similar test that allows me to quantify learning in this course. Please follow the instructions on the attached Post Test attachment in this folder. These should also be uploaded to BB NLT Sunday at midnight. You do not receive a grade for your responses but you will receive a grade for completing the assignment.

| Reflection | I first upload an audio Power Point where I pull the responding skills into focus for the students. I attempt to model the skill and demonstrate the applicability of the skill. Then I host Elluminate sessions to role play with the students.

In the written assignments I ask the student to listen to former students recordings that I have uploaded. I ask them to transcribe 4 responses from the helper and discriminate the skill used (Indicate if it was a response to content, feeling or meaning). Then I ask them to make 4 interchangeable responses to the |
helpee in the recording. Because the students’ recordings were on you-tube the use of the media worked well. Students uploaded the responses and identified the skills. I rate this as an eight on a scale of 10. I think this can be improved by doing this exercise in real time. This is one I would like to have students watching and providing interchangeable responses right after hearing the helpee speak. I am not sure how this would work but this is something I hope to work into the curriculum. This is important because students are preparing their final recordings and they need a quick turnaround in their homework assignments and that is often difficult towards the end of the quarter.

| The final week was the summative assessment of student learning | Students were asked to upload their recorded sessions and their transcript. They were also asked to provide written feedback to the instructor regarding the course. |
| Reflection | As a result of the first recording students were successful in uploading recorded sessions. I had one student bring me her recording from the first class and I had the same thing in the second class. This is an issue we must overcome in a F2F class as well as the online course. I rate this as a 7 out of 10. There is always ways to improve teaching students about technology. |
Appendix B. Consent Form
Title of Research study:
Developing Helping Skills in an Online Environment

Introduction:
You are invited to take part in a research study that will evaluate whether helping skills can be taught in an online environment. This study is open to students enrolled in this course. Besides this consent document you are not asked to do anything outside of your normal course work.

Purpose:
The purpose of this research study is to determine if interpersonal helping knowledge and skills can be taught in an online environment. This research will evaluate the impact the online environment has on the teaching and learning involving interpersonal skills.

Duration:
Your participation in this research study will last the entire 11A quarter. There is no difference in requirements for students who choose to participate and for those who choose not to participate. This consent allows the researcher to use your pre and post test scores, final recording scores, demographic information, and comments on the satisfaction survey in the results of the study.

Procedures:
Students are asked to review this consent to participate. The course material has been determined and uploaded to Blackboard. Assessment of the material is graded using a standardized instrument. The Assessment of the Pre and Post test scores will be evaluated first by the Primary Investigator of this study (your instructor) then it will be evaluated by a Co-Principal Investigator to assure inter-rater reliability. If students agree to participate they are asked to send an email to another instructor Dr. Rick Butts. He will maintain a list of students who agree to participate in the study. This information will not be revealed to your instructor until course grades have been submitted to the registrar.

Risks/Discomforts:
Risks or discomfort from participating in this research study are not anticipated. Some individuals participating may experience minimal emotional discomfort as it relates to learning new technology. Your grade for this course is not affected by your decision to participate. The PI does not know the students who agreed to participate until the grades are turned into the registrar.
Benefits:
You will receive no direct benefits by participating in this study. The data collection will inform changes in practice that benefit both teachers as well as students.

Confidentiality:
All test scores, demographic information and satisfaction surveys will be kept confidential. All data (survey results, demographic information, pre and post test scores) will be stored on a password-protected computer for 3 years. During data analysis, digital copies of these data will be stored on UC Blackboard servers for accessibility; this site is password protected and only available to principal investigator. The Co-PI will have limited access to the scores to review the pre and post test for reliability. These files will be maintained for one year on Blackboard. Any paper documents regarding the research data will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the investigator’s office. Only the primary investigator and the research team will have access to your data. Paper research data will be stored for three years after the end of this study and then will be destroyed by shredding. The data from the study may be published; however, you will not be identified by name.

Legal Rights:
Nothing in this consent form waives any legal rights you may have. This consent form also does not release the investigator, the institution, or its agents from liability for negligence.

Offer to Answer Questions:
If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact Jill Gomez, LISW-S, LICDC, Instructor 513 732-5266. The University of Cincinnati Institutional Review Board reviews all research projects that involve human participants to be sure the rights and welfare of participants are protected.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or complaints about the study, you may contact the UC IRB at (513) 558-5259. Or, you may call the UC Research Compliance Hotline at (800) 889-1547, or write to the IRB, 300 University Hall, ML 0567, 51 Goodman Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0567, or email the IRB office at irb@ucmail.uc.edu

Voluntary Participation:
You do NOT have to participate in this research study. You may choose not to participate or you may quit participating AT ANY TIME.
Agreement:
I have read this consent document. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. Please type your name in the participant’s signature line and type in the date. Save this document as a word file or rich text file and upload the document to rick.butts@uc.edu.

Please Print your name on this line

Participant Signature

Date

Signature and Title of Person Obtaining Consent

Date
Appendix C. Script for Research Study

Script for Research Study
Developing Helping Skills in an Online Environment

Statement by the instructor: Welcome to the winter quarter. I am excited to be a part of your learning experience. You are enrolled in the Communication for Professional Services I course. This is an online course with primarily asynchronous activities. We will have some scheduled elluminate sessions for students to practice skill development.

As a doctoral student and full time faculty member I have many research interests. As a therapist for over 20 years I recognize the importance of developing helping skills. These roles and interests are integrated in this classroom experience. I have developed this course with the hope and intent of collecting data to inform teaching and learning.

As students who are enrolled in this course you are eligible to participate in this research study. It is important that I inform you that there is nothing different for students who choose to participate and for those who choose to not participate. The class learning experience is the same for each student in this class.

By consenting to this research study you will allow me to use your demographic information (no identifying information), the results of satisfaction surveys, and pre/post test scores. All the information will be presented in aggregate form.

Students are asked to type your name in the signature line and attach the word document in an email to Dr. Rick Butts at rick.butts@uc.edu. A copy of the consent form has been uploaded to the document section of Blackboard. Your email will indicate whether or not you have given consent to participate in this study.
Appendix D. Demographic Survey

Online Communication for Professional Services I
11A
Demographic Information

The following information is being asked to help us understand how the social characteristics of participants may influence responses to the study. Note: responses are completely confidential. Individual responses will be grouped and results will be presented in aggregate form.

Please provide the following information:

1. Please indicate your gender ___________________

2. Please indicate the ethnicity that reflects your cultural experience:
   
   African American_____  
   Asian American_____  
   Hispanic and Latino American_____  
   Native American_____  
   Euro-American_____  
   Appalachian American_____  
   Other (please indicate)_________________

3. Age _________________

4. Reason for taking this course___________________________ If it is required for your program simply respond (required)

5. Currently employed outside the home? Please indicate employment status.
   
   Full-time_____  
   Part-time_____  
   Not employed outside the home____

6. Number of prior online courses taken_________________

7. On a scale of 1 to 10 - Indicate your comfort level with online courses. 1 means terribly uncomfortable and 10 means extremely comfortable ___________________

8. On a scale of 1 to 10 – Indicate how strong you believe your listening skills are. 1 Means they are terribly weak and 10 means they are very strong _____________

9. Grade you expect to receive in this course___________________
Appendix E. Satisfaction Survey

Satisfaction Survey

1. Please describe what knowledge (new information) you acquired as a result of taking this course.

2. Please describe the interpersonal communication skills you developed as a result of taking this course.

3. Please describe your overall experience in this course.

4. What technology challenges did you need to overcome in order to successfully complete this course?

5. Please respond to the following statement by agreeing or disagreeing.

   I was successful at developing interpersonal communication skills (attending and responding) in an online environment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter 11F</th>
<th>Question 1 - Please describe what knowledge (new information) you acquired as a result of taking this course</th>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
<th>Inferences/notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As a result of taking this course, I learned how to communicate with others and how to respond to someone in a certain situation and let them know that I understand by expressing emotion</td>
<td>Responding Understanding emotions</td>
<td>Empathy Professional skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This class has showed me how to communicate with other people. I never realized how much I actually do not listen to people when they talk. I also learned that I ask a lot of question when talking with people and I never really feel what they feel or say so you are feeling.... This has showed me a lot</td>
<td>Listening Responding</td>
<td>Professional skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before taking this class, I never knew exactly how much body language actually took place to make a conversation better. I believe now body language is very important in order to express how you’re really feeling. I never knew repeating what someone has said to you back is a good way of showing you’re listening.</td>
<td>Observations Non-verbal behavior Listening</td>
<td>Professional skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I learned a lot of information regarding being a good listener. The projects and discussions really taught me things about myself that I did not know. Learning to paraphrase has really helped me to be more involved with</td>
<td>Listening Responding</td>
<td>Professional skills Empathy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the other person’s issue. My ability to listen now is more productive and un-intrusive.

One thing that I learned from this class was how to be present in my life. It has helped me to step back in certain situations and really analyze what is going on. It has helped me to really listen and observe others as they are talking to figure out what they are trying to tell me. It might not necessarily be from the context of what they are saying but how they are saying it. I have learned how to respond to others to let them know that I am really listening to what they have to say and that I am trying to understand them.

I have learned how to become a good listener. I have learned about body language and the meaning of it. I am able to be less judgmental, and jump to conclusions and able to respond in order to open up the conversation and keep it going.

I have really learned how to listen better in all settings not just in helping ones. This class has helped me learn the material in my other classes also. I have learned that sitting up straignt and leaning forward and keeping eye contact with the helpee makes you focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Other Person's Issue</th>
<th>Being Present</th>
<th>Personal Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My Ability to Listen Now</td>
<td>Attending</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I Have Learned How to Become</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Professional Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Good Listener. I Have Learned</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Body Language and the</td>
<td>Non-verbal Behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning of It. I Am Able to</td>
<td>Less Judgmental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Less Judgmental, and Jump</td>
<td>Responding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Conclusions and Able To</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond In Order To Open Up</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Conversation And Keep It</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Going.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| I Have Really Learned How to | Listening | Professional Skills |
| Listen Better In All Settings | Being Present |                |
| Not Just In Helping Ones.     |            |                |
| This Class Has Helped Me     | Attending  |                |
| Learn The Material In My     | Eye-contact|                |
| Other Classes Also. I Have   | Listening  |                |
| Learned That Sitting Up      |            |                |
| Straight And Leaning Forward |            |                |
| And Keeping Eye Contact With |            |                |
| The Helpee Makes You Focus  |            |                |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Skills</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Professional Skills</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 12W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned that people need to stop and realize that we all have differences and that we should respect those differences instead of discriminating against them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a result of this class, I have become a better listener. The information that I acquired has increased my ability to attend to the helpee. It has</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more on that person. They also know that your listening to them and not drifting off thinking about other things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned a lot about listening and how it helps me and my relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have learned how to become a better listener. This is especially true when it comes to talking with my husband. I now sit down and listen to what he has to say instead of not listening to it all. This is something that I have learned well in this class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt my communications skills were pretty strong at the beginning of the course. I have definitely learned new skills when it comes to attending. Learning how to be present when listening is the best new skill I have acquired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to better communicate with others. To not be judgmental when talking with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned how to listen more closely. Listening has always been a problem with me. I get distracted easily, and tend to tune out. I also learned that instead of using words like angry, I can say perturbed or furious. I love learning new words, and that was a fun assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I also learned how to be a good listener and how to respond back to people. Being the helper in a helping situation helped me do this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better listening skills and a better appreciation of culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned that when you paraphrase a person you do it more in your own words. When you use the words that the person uses than you are just really parroting them instead of paraphrasing them. I never heard of that technique before this class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have learned how to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
communicate better. I had problems with eye contact while talking with someone. I’m slowly starting to overcome this. I also how to use proper words, and how to listen better. For example, make eye contact, acknowledge, listen to what they have to say, and wait till they are finished before I talk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter 11F</th>
<th>Question 2 - Please describe the interpersonal helping skills you developed as a result of taking this course</th>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
<th>Inferences/notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The interpersonal communication skills I developed were the listening, attending, and responding skills. It was hard for me at first to listen to someone without talking or responding to what they were saying but when I was able to attend to them, I learned the right way to respond to them without parroting or elongating my responses.</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Professional skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have learned that there are more feeling than just sad, angry, happy, the basics. People can feel different kind of feelings. It helped me understand how and why people behave and communicate in different ways to construct and negotiate a social reality.

Understanding human behavior/observations
Feeling vocabulary

I have developed how to practice and to give feedback. I have managed the skill of being a good listener.

Listening
Feedback/responding

As a result of taking this course. I feel that I will have better interpersonal communication skills now because I am not interrupting people as much and giving them the time to get out what they want to say. I am able to guide them along the conversation without judging or asking questions that halt the conversation. This type of listening and responding shows others that you care and are interested in what they have to say. I am also better at attending to the present needs of someone else.

Listening
Non-judgmental
Attending
Empathy
Professional skills

I learned how to respond to others. I learned how to be present. I learned the appropriate ways to communicate to others. I learned how to really listen and analyze what others are saying. I learned how to attend to others.

Responding
Being present
Listening
Inferences
Attending
Empathy
Professional skills

I am able to respond better to a conversation due to the listing skills that I have obtained. I am

Listening
Responding
Active listening
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12W Class</th>
<th>Listening skills and how to pay attention to body language</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Professional skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was able to learn how to</td>
<td>Responding</td>
<td>Professional skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>able to find the 5WH in a conversation and relate them to the conversation.</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</table>

| The main thing I have learned is when it is okay to talk when trying to help someone that you need to hear what they are saying before you start talking. | Listening | Professional skills |
| Responding | Understanding |

| Really listen to the person on what they are saying. Finding the 5 WH's. You feel...because..., always make sure you understand on how they really feel about their problem or you might give them the wrong advise. | Listening | Empathy |
| Understanding |

| Attending, responding, and listening | Attending | |
| Responding | |
| listening |

| Once again I believe this is my listening skills. I think that this overall is something that I have mastered and believe this class helped me with this | Listening | Confidence |

| I feel my ability to understand those who don’t have the same opinion as I do differently now. Internally, I used to immediately judge people regarding their views but I have learned through the skills of this class to be more open and to listen to their opinions. After all, we are all entitled to our own. | Non-judgmental | Professional skills |
| Listening | Tolerance |

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| respond without it being a question versus a statement | I learned ways to reflect content and meaning to communications from others. To be aware of nonverbal communications such as body language and eye contact, not only in the helpee but my self as well. Cultural, ethnicities, and gender differences impact the manners of communication as well as the meaning of communication content. | Responding | Understanding the meaning of what someone is expressing
Non-verbal behavior
Eye-contact
Culture
Tolerance
Professional skills |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Responding
listening | Professional skills |
| | | Listening
Responding | |
| | | Responding | Professional skills |
| | | The one thing that I can take away from this class that when I respond to a person in a helping situation I should respond by saying “so you feel _____ because | |
| | | Responding | Professional skills |
| | | Responding | Professional skills |
| | | Attending | Empowerment |

The one thing that I can take away from this class is that when I respond to a person in a helping situation, I should respond by saying “so you feel _____ because.

The ability to capture the sentiment of what someone is saying in just a few words.

Attending I can walk away from this class knowing that I can attend to someone better. I learn the skills to attend better far as sitting square and looking at the person, giving good eye.
contact and keeping my body movement in check.

I learned how to make better eye contact and listen better. Before I couldn’t make eye contact, and had a problem listening. I always wanted to interrupt people while they were talking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter 11F</th>
<th>Question 3 Please describe your overall experience in this course</th>
<th>Emergent Theme</th>
<th>Inferences/notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, I had a good experience in this course. I had never taken an online class before so in the beginning I was overwhelmed by the assignments that were due on different days at certain times. I adjusted and I was able to complete most of the assignments on time although uploading recordings were difficult for me.</td>
<td>Positive Challenges with technology</td>
<td>Empowered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would have to say that my overall experience has been good. The teacher was very flexible and that really helps since it is in online class. I have had fun while doing the recordings and it makes me look at things totally differently.</td>
<td>Positive Flexible instructor Fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a great overall experience; this class has taught me a lot of new things. I am now working on all these</td>
<td>Positive Still working on skills Personally &amp;</td>
<td>Students still practicing the skills. Sees the usefulness of the skills in current</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skills I learned in my everyday life and also at a professional level. I don’t think I could have learned it better. There was a good amount of practicing ideas to get what the skill was. I thought the course was great. I grew as a student and as a person. The meeting at specific times or with others was a little difficult, but I see the need for that to work on the skills. Ms. Gomez was wonderful about helping the students learn. She was always available to the students and that was really helpful for me. This class taught me not only professional skills, but life skills and I am grateful.</td>
<td>professionally</td>
<td>roles.</td>
<td>Despite the challenges with synchronous times student sees the purpose of the “real time” practice sessions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>This course was very helpful. I feel more confident that I can move forward in my school career and towards a working career with having the ability to help others more effectively. I think I need some more practice but this course has really helped in getting me started and has steered me in the right direction</td>
<td>Confidence as a student and a professional. Recognizes the importance of more practice. Concordance with career choice</td>
<td>Empowered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have had a very good experience in this course. I have a lot more confidence with using technology.</td>
<td>Positive experience</td>
<td>Empowered/confident using new technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really enjoyed this class everything about it was fun! I did not find anything stressful about this course.</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Im not sure on where to start. This quarter has been one of the hardest for me. I have been going though alot and going though it and still pushing myself to learn from this class has helped me in a lot of different ways. I have used my skills that I learned from this class on people that I love and have been having a hard time communicating with. I have learned alot that I really didn't know or just didn't think about doing to help others. I have learned how to listin more and show that I am. I have learned to hear what they are saying. I have learned how to communicate with others as to befor I would not listin to what they had to say.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Using skills in personal relationships to overcome challenges</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a great time in this course. I learned a lot and will take a lot with me throughout my career</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My overall experience with this class was excellent. All the students were willing to help each other and Jill was a wonderful teacher. I believe my grade will only be a C, but I did work hard and learn so much. If I could pick a class like this one again I would</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong connection with other students</td>
<td>Despite the grade of C would take class again</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not sure if it was due to the anonymity of the course but the class opened up on a</td>
<td>Strong connection with other students</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
personal level that I was surprised to see. I was apprehensive about taking a communications course online. I didn’t see how it would workout. I was quite thrilled when it turned out as positive as it did.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12W Class</th>
<th>I enjoyed this class</th>
<th>Positive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This course was an enjoyable experience and I was able to refresh many of my skills through this course</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This course has been very helpful in helping me to increase my communication and attending skill. The professor challenged me to push myself beyond my level of comfort which was very helpful for me. The professor created a friendly and helpful online environment. The use of the discussion board was instrumental in providing great peer interactions</td>
<td>Positive Felt challenged Discussion board instrumental in connecting with other students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I enjoyed this class</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It had its challenges, but went well and I learned some new information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I had a good experience in this class. I am pretty shy, but I found that communicating online was way easier than if I were in class. I liked learning new ways to listen and communicate effectively</td>
<td>Positive Shy- format assisted student in overcoming shyness in the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I really enjoyed taking this course; I learned a lot more than I thought I was going to. I am sure these skills will come</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarter 11F</td>
<td>Question 4 What technology challenges did you need to overcome in order to successfully complete this course?</td>
<td>Emergent Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I needed to feel more comfortable talking through a Mic</td>
<td>Important to feel comfortable using</td>
<td>Mic</td>
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</table>
| Mic when everyone can hear me on a whole new program (Elluminate Live) that I had to learn how to use. I also needed to make sure to check my email and Blackboard daily. | Elluminate | new technology  
| | Check Email/BB daily | Regular contacts from instructor was noted  
| I had a few things go wrong when uploading my recordings but I worked through it and luckily I had people to help me. I always seemed to have files that were too large to upload. Once I changed the file type then it worked just fine... | Uploading recordings | Overcame challenges  
| | Changing files formats |  
| I never knew how to change a file to an mp3 file. I also have never recorded myself on a computer, before this class I wouldn’t know where to even begin. | Changing file formats | Use of new technology  
| | Recording self |  
| I am not very computer savvy, so doing Elluminate sessions and downloading videos was all new to me. It wasn’t that challenging because I thoroughly enjoyed learning those skills. | Elluminate | Enjoyed learning the new technology  
| | Uploading videos to LMS or other platform |  
| I didn’t really have any technological challenges. I had to buy a headset but I had all of the other things that I needed from previous classes. It was hard for other people in one of my groups to upload a video but other than that I didn’t have any trouble. |  |  

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I was able to use the Elluminate sessions, work headsets, and make MP3 files that I use to have no idea what they were.</th>
<th>Elluminate Changing file formats</th>
<th>Enjoyed learning the new technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>Upload recordings</td>
<td>Was not able to overcome this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have had a lot of technology problems and that was with not being able to download my recordings which I never got fixed. That was my big problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most challenges was my recording. I thought I was pretty good at uploading things to whatever I needed to but found myself having many problem when it came to uploading things to blackboard.</td>
<td>Uploading recordings to BB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The main technology challenge I had was a working computer. On finals week, of all weeks, my computer decided to crash. I was able to get a new one rather quickly though. Technology based, I would say that is the worst thing someone taking online classes could face. I learned a tough lesson in making sure everything is backed up on flash drives every day. I lost everything. Other than the computer issue, the other technology challenge I faced was trying to work with the different types of file formats. I didn’t have any trouble when uploading my files except the amount of</td>
<td>Computer crashed File formats</td>
<td>Overcame challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12W Class</td>
<td>Nothing really except how to find eliminate then I was okay after I found the link.</td>
<td>Elluminate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I did not have to overcome any technology challenges in this course as I use technology quite a bit and have done many online courses prior to this one.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My greatest technology challenge was in uploading videos to the discussion board. The first time I had to do this it took me a few attempts to get it right. However, this learning experience proved to be successful because the second time I uploaded a video, I did so without any problems.</td>
<td>Uploading videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to get my microphone to work</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figuring out how to use elluminate through blackboard and uploading videos was new as well.</td>
<td>Elluminate Uploading recordings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I needed to update and download certain things. I had a hard time uploading my recordings</td>
<td>Upload recordings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The only technology problem that I had to overcome was to learn how to use the elluminate tool. I had never heard of it before this class but found that it was quite easy to use.</td>
<td>Elluminate</td>
<td>Positive experience once used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I learned that how to use the elluminate tool to communicate over the internet. I had no clue how to use this before but found out that it was actually quite simple.

I also had trouble downloading my recording to BB I guess because my recording was too big so I had to figure out how to post my recording to YouTube that took me two tries to be successful.

I still never learned how to do elluminate. I could never get my computer to work. Or when we had the sessions I was never able to join, because if I’m not at school I was always at work. So I could never attend any of those sessions.