

Introduction

LETTER FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM



Issue 8 | Summer 2026

Dear reader,

Author Greg Boyle (2017) wrote in his second book, “The truth is, I’m only writing this because I need it.” In some ways, the same feels true for this issue of the *Teaching Practice Briefs* (TPBs). We launched it because we needed it. Since January 2025, so much of the United States and the world have been shaped by new political and social forces, and counselor education has felt these impacts in diverse, profound ways. As an editorial leadership team working at four different universities, we felt these effects firsthand as we navigated hostility towards DEI research, anti-equity policies, reduced budgets, and anticipatory compliance.

When our editorial team convened in the Spring of 2025, former co-editor Dr. Javier Casado Pérez reminded us that we have a tool to respond to such sociopolitical forces: these very practice briefs. As new co-editor, Dr. Susan Branco, came on board last year, she reiterated the need for a TPB issue like this one to provide ideas and potential solutions to colleagues in our field. One year later, we are grateful to present this issue rich with innovative teaching ideas and instructional strategies to respond to the current sociopolitical times.

Admittedly, as we prepared the call for this issue and waited for submissions, we were nervous. We

confessed to one another that we ourselves felt we had limited tools to respond to the current sociopolitical times, and though we were hopeful that we could mine wisdom from our colleagues in the field, we were unsure if they would prepare and share such ideas for the TPBs. In response to our apprehension we provided an opportunity for anonymous submissions for this special issue. Ultimately, our colleagues showed up. We received more than 40 submissions for the special issue and our fears about not receiving enough ideas transformed into struggles deciding how many briefs we had the capacity to publish. The endeavor was a reminder of the brilliance, creativity, and commitment of our colleagues in counselor education.

The enclosed issue is our final product, an effort designed to answer questions counselor educators (including ourselves) have asked so many times in the last year and a half, like “what can I do?”, “how should I teach about this?”, and “how can I respond in the classroom?” Some article topics in this issue are highly specific, like Jalilzadeh’s instructional strategy preparing counseling students to navigate documentation for pregnant clients in states with limited medical options and Finn et al.’s article on how to use career case studies reflecting sociopolitical themes in flipped classrooms. Other articles are broader, theory-based pieces, like Su and Martz’s brief on Community Cultural Wealth and Sawyer and Leazer’s brief about implementing

Relational-Cultural Theory, Connected Teaching, and the Pedagogy of Vulnerability to facilitate learning in sociopolitically complex times. Lastly, several briefs straddle theoretical concepts to recommend innovative teaching practices, like Green and Daniel’s ideas on using abolitionist praxis to support client wellness and safety in contexts of police violence and Guthery and Ausloos’ brief about reflective activism in counseling classrooms to address sociopolitical issues. We are grateful to all of these authors for their ideas and recommendations in such challenging times.

On a personal note, this is the final issue that Clare will publish for the TPBs, closing her term as co-editor. As she reflected on the past four years, what stood out most was a comment a counselor educator made at the 2023 ACES conference in Denver during a panel discussion with TPB authors about their teaching innovations. She posed this question to us, “Shouldn’t we be having these conversations about teaching more often? Isn’t this more important than budgets or policies or the other things we always meet with our colleagues about?” Indeed, these conversations about teaching matter, and we hope that the TPBs have helped to facilitate them among counselor educators. The remainder of the editorial leadership team, the TPB editorial board, and the many TPB authors will continue the meaningful dialogue in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Clare Merlin-Knoblich, Co-Editor; Susan Rodriguez Branco, Co-Editor; Tamika Jackson, Associate Editor; Lillian C Martz, Editorial Assistant

Editorial Team, *Teaching Practice Briefs**

* Are you interested in submitting your own evidence-based counselor education teaching innovation or instructional strategy to a future issue of the *Teaching Practice Briefs*? Visit acesonline.net/TeachingPracticeBriefs to view calls for briefs and corresponding deadlines.