

Teaching Equity Without Indoctrination

Using Community Cultural Wealth to Cultivate Critical Consciousness in Counselor Education

In an increasingly polarized sociopolitical climate, counselor educators face increased scrutiny of equity-focused teaching while also being tasked with ethically preparing counselors to recognize systemic inequities. In this article, we introduce the community cultural wealth (CCW; Yosso, 2005) framework as an asset-based, inquiry-driven pedagogical framework to teach equity without ideology. Using critical race theory, we describe a five-phase CCW cycle used in a graduate school counseling course on Tier 1 classroom guidance. Combined with the universal design for learning framework, this approach repositions students as knowledge holders, challenges deficit assumptions, and promotes culturally affirming teaching. Implications for counselor education and future research are discussed.

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Introduction

Counselor educators are training future counselors in a sociopolitical context characterized by rising polarization and increased examination of language concerning equity, diversity, and social justice (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2024; Ratts et al., 2016; Singh et al., 2020). Across many regions, efforts to address racism, systemic inequities, and culturally responsive practice have become increasingly subject to political and legislative scrutiny, leaving counselor educators navigating tensions between their professional responsibility and evolving sociopolitical constraints (Goodman-Scott et al., 2025; Wilson, 2024). At the same time, counselor education programs have an ethical obligation to train counselors capable of supporting, affirming, and advocating for students and families from historically marginalized communities (CACREP, 2024; Ratts et al., 2016; American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014). This effort includes striving for equitable participation, safety, and inclusion within educational systems (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2022, A.10). These competing realities create a central tension for the field: counselor educators must equip future counselors to recognize and respond to inequity, yet direct “equity instruction” may be resisted, misunderstood, or politicized.

In today’s sociopolitical climate, counselors-in-training often experience multicultural and social justice learning as both developmentally meaningful and emotionally demanding as they develop multicultural awareness, advocacy, and social justice competencies (Chopra et al., 2024; Malott et al., 2023). Throughout this developmental process, students commonly encounter intellectual and emotional challenges as they navigate systemic inequities, identity issues, and power dynamics (Chopra et al., 2024). Trainees from marginalized groups also share experiences of microaggressions and worries about training that prioritizes White comfort, highlighting the complexities of developing cultural competence and advocacy abilities in counselor education (Chopra et al., 2024). While universities have begun reexamining the long-standing inequities embedded within their institutions (Mull, 2020), counselor educators can intentionally embed asset-based approaches within coursework so that this orientation benefits not only counselors-in-training but also the students, families, and communities they will ultimately serve.

In this context, counselor educators require pedagogical methods that are both principled and adaptable. The community cultural wealth (CCW; Yosso, 2005) framework offers such a bridge. Rather than positioning equity as a set of beliefs to be transmitted, CCW invites students into an asset-based, inquiry-driven process of noticing and interpreting human experience. By focusing on the existing cultural knowledge, skills, and resilience within communities, CCW shifts the approach from ideological persuasion to careful observation in learning (Yosso, 2005; Reyes & Duran, 2021). Counselor educators can use this approach to help future practitioners to observe and identify strengths, patterns, and inequities within real contexts, rather than simply telling students what to think. This article demonstrates how CCW can be implemented as a pedagogical cycle in counselor education, providing a practical model for teaching equity through observation, reflection, and practice instead of persuasion.

Critical Race Theory and Community Cultural Wealth

Scholarship based on critical race theory has long shown that the knowledge, resilience, and survival strategies developed by BIPOC and immigrant communities are often overlooked or undervalued within Western academic traditions, including counselor education (Yosso, 2005). In many graduate training settings, culturally rooted ways of knowing, especially those shaped by migration, racialization, and collective struggle, are often viewed as “background” rather than valuable epistemic resources (Reyes & Duran, 2021; Yosso, 2005). This pattern of epistemic marginalization not only devalues the knowledge and experiences of students from historically excluded communities (Reyes & Duran, 2021; Yosso, 2005) but also narrows the perspectives and forms of knowledge that counselor education legitimizes, thereby limiting opportunities for all counselors-in-training to develop more expansive understandings of clients, communities and culturally responsive practice (Malott et al., 2023; Shure et al., 2023).

CCW (Yosso, 2005) is an alternative pedagogical paradigm that can be used to challenge deficit-oriented and White-centered frameworks embedded in counselor preparation. Rather than treating culture as an “add-on” to core content, counselor educators can use CCW to reconceptualize students’ lived experiences as foundational sources of knowledge. Although counselor educators may recognize similarities between CCW and broader strengths-based approaches, the CCW framework extends beyond identifying individual assets or resilience. Rooted in Latina and Latino critical legal theory (LatCrit), Yosso (2005) conceptualized CCW as recognizing forms of cultural knowledge, resistance, and community-based capital developed within Black, Indigenous, and Brown communities in response to systemic inequities. In naming CCW, Yosso (2005) identified six forms of capital: aspirational, familial, linguistic, navigational, resistant, and social capital. They reflect long-standing, community-created systems of resilience, survival, and resistance to racism and structural marginalization.

CCW has been discussed broadly across disciplines such as education, sociology, and youth development (Acevedo & Solorzano, 2021; Boettcher et al., 2022; Park et al., 2025). The approach has also been intentionally integrated into teacher preparation programs where it has been shown to shape candidates’ perceptions of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Boettcher et al., 2022). For example, Moeller and Bielfeldt (2011) examined the integration of critical race theory and CCW into a teacher education curriculum and found that teacher candidates identified multiple forms of cultural capital while reflecting on their direct interactions with Native American students during a diversity workshop. Candidates most frequently recognized aspirational, familial, and linguistic capital suggesting that CCW provided a concrete lens for noticing strengths that might otherwise be overlooked or pathologized. Importantly, the authors concluded that CCW holds promise for transforming perceptions and attitudes in professional preparation particularly when paired with intentional pedagogical strategies such as pre-contact activities and the use of counterstories (Moeller & Bielfeldt, 2011).

Extending the Community Cultural Wealth Framework to School Counselor Education

While these findings highlight the educational impact of CCW in teacher training, similar application efforts in counselor education are limited. This absence is significant because school counselors play a key role in tackling inequity, assisting marginalized youth and families, and navigating systems influenced by race, power, and privilege (ASCA, 2024a; ASCA, 2024b). Integrating CCW into counselor training, therefore, represents a critical and underexplored opportunity to move beyond deficit-based frameworks and prepare counselors-in-training to recognize, honor, and mobilize the cultural assets already present within their peers, clients, and communities.

Integrating CCW into a graduate school counseling course shifts the instructional stance from remediation to recognition. Students are not positioned as novices who must abandon their cultural frameworks in order to become “professional” but rather as knowledge holders whose histories, languages, family systems, and survival strategies actively shape their clinical insight. In this way, CCW-informed teaching reframes counselor preparation as a collective, relational, and justice-oriented process that affirms students’ cultural assets and prepares them to recognize and leverage similar forms of wealth among the youth, families, and communities they will serve.

In school counseling, Tier 1 classroom-based guidance represents one of the most powerful and underutilized levers for systemic impact (Savitz-Romer & Sink, 2023). Comprehensive school counseling programs aligned with the larger multitiered system of support (MTSS) serve all students through the avenue of Tier 1 classroom lessons provided to all students (Goodman-Scott & Ockerman, 2023). These lessons offer an avenue for school counselors to reach all students, shape norms around belonging and behavior, and influence school climate at scale (ASCA, 2025; Lopez & Mason, 2018). When designed thoughtfully, Tier 1 instruction can be used to interrupt deficit narratives, normalize cultural affirmation, and cultivate shared language around relationships, emotion, and community (National Center for School Mental Health [NCSMH], 2023). Conversely, when classroom guidance is grounded in behavior-focused frameworks that address student conduct without confronting racism, bias, and cultural context, the school counselor risks reproducing the very inequities counselors aim to disrupt (Scott et al., 2025). Preparing school counselors-in-training to design classroom guidance through an asset-based framework is therefore not ancillary; it is central to the ethical and systemic mission of school counseling (American School Counselor Association, n.d.).

In school counselor education, one particularly generative site for CCW-informed pedagogy is the course context in which school counselors-in-training learn how to design and facilitate classroom-based guidance lessons. These courses typically emphasize instructional planning, developmental appropriateness, classroom management, and alignment with school standards and comprehensive school counseling frameworks, yet they may inadvertently privilege

deficit-oriented perspectives on students and behavior (Pinto, 2013). This deficit mindset blames individuals or cultures for challenges, ignoring systemic barriers and inequities (Patton Davis & Museus, 2019). Educators influenced by deficit thinking often attribute educational challenges to students, families, and communities rather than addressing systemic issues (Dudley-Marling, 2015). Viewing educational challenges primarily as the result of individual or cultural deficiencies conceals structural accountability and perpetuates harmful stereotypes about learners. Critiquing deficit-based thinking does not mean ignoring disparities in achievement, opportunity, access, or outcomes (Holcomb-McCoy, 2022). School counselors use disaggregated data to identify inequities and advocate for interventions for historically underserved students (ASCA, 2022). A CCW-informed view reframes these disparities, urging counselors to examine systemic, structural, and contextual factors behind inequitable outcomes, while recognizing students' cultural strengths, resilience, and resources. Asset-based and equity-focused approaches are complementary.

Integrating CCW into graduate school counseling coursework redefines lesson planning as both a form of cultural acknowledgment and an ethical duty. Instead of questioning, "What do students lack?", school counselors-in-training are encouraged to consider, "What cultural knowledge, resilience, and connections are already available?" and how guidance can be developed from the identified strengths. In this way, CCW becomes not an abstract theory but a practical lens for curriculum design, classroom facilitation, and professional identity development, preparing future school counselors to view classrooms as sites of possibility and cultural wealth rather than deficiency. This teaching practice brief outlines the design and implementation of a CCW-informed instructional approach within a graduate-level school counseling course focused on classroom-based guidance and instructional lesson design. The strategy aims to disrupt deficit-oriented assumptions in counselor preparation by equipping school counselors-in-training with an asset-based framework for interpreting students' behavior, learning, and lived contexts.

Community Cultural Wealth Framework– Informed Instructional Strategy

In a sociopolitical context where equity-focused language is frequently politicized, this CCW-informed strategy provides counselor educators with a way to promote justice without framing students as ideological subjects. CCW (Yosso, 2005) functions not as a set of beliefs to be adopted but as a disciplined method for noticing cultural assets, relational patterns, and systemic inequities in everyday practice. Although CCW is explicitly grounded in critical race theory and LatCrit, the phrase "teaching equity without indoctrination" does not suggest political neutrality or distance from these theoretical foundations. Rather, it reflects a pedagogical approach that emphasizes inquiry, observation, reflection, and authentic practice rather than directing counselors-in-training toward predetermined conclusions. Students are invited to

critically examine lived experiences, systems, and cultural knowledge while developing their own understanding of equity and professional practice.

This strategy herein was created for a graduate counseling course that trains school counselors-in-training to develop and deliver Tier 1 classroom guidance lessons, universal and preventive classroom-based interventions designed to promote students' academic, social-emotional, and behavioral development at the school-wide level through activities such as social-emotional learning, relationship-building, conflict resolution, and classroom community development (Savitz-Romer & Sink, 2023). While the community cultural wealth framework served as the interpretive and ethical center of our guidance lesson course, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework provided an additional pedagogical layer by guiding school counselors-in-training in designing lessons that promote equitable access and engagement for all learners (CAST, 2024; Vostal et al., 2023). UDL emphasizes designing instruction through multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression to reduce barriers and increase accessibility for diverse learners. School counseling students were taught to pair CCW's asset-based lens with UDL's commitment to removing barriers, ensuring that Tier 1 guidance lessons were culturally affirming and accessible to all learners. In this way, UDL was used as a guide to how students could engage, represent understanding, and express learning, while CCW was used to shape whose knowledge and ways of being were centered once students arrived.

Within our guidance lesson course, CCW served as the organizing pedagogical framework shaping not only what students learned but how they learned and how they came to understand themselves and others as cultural beings within educational systems. Because classroom guidance has the potential to increase belonging (Cunningham et al., 2025), surface and challenge biased, "race-neutral" assumptions that normalize inequity (Better-Bubon et al., 2022), and influence peer norms at scale (Laursen & Veenstra, 2021), preparing counselors-in-training to design Tier 1 instruction through an asset-based lens is central to the ethical and systemic mission of school counseling (ASCA, n.d.). Instruction about our CCW-integrated strategy unfolded through a five-phase pedagogical cycle (see Figure 1) that operationalized CCW as a method for seeing, teaching, and becoming.

PHASE 1: REPOSITIONING STUDENTS AS KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS

From the first week, CCW was enacted through experiential and relational practices that positioned students as knowledge holders. During the opening sessions, students were invited to bring a meaningful object from their cultural background or to share a food connected to their family or community. They reflected on how these artifacts shaped their identities, values, and professional aspirations. This activity functioned as more than an icebreaker; it modeled aspirational, familial, and linguistic capital in action and established the classroom as a space where lived experience constituted legitimate knowledge. For example, one student shared a family recipe passed down across generations and reflected on how food traditions shaped their understanding of care, belonging, and resilience within their community. Starting with students' cultural assets, lived experiences, and existing strengths, the course invited

students to reflect on and share the knowledge, values, and perspectives they already brought into the learning environment. Instead of positioning students from a deficit perspective, the course emphasized cultural strengths and community knowledge as important foundations for learning.

PHASE 2: TRAINING ASSET-BASED NOTICING

Throughout the semester, CCW was woven into discussions of school counseling practice, with particular attention to how counselors can recognize and affirm K-12 students' assets in classroom-based work. Rather than framing guidance around "fixing" behavior or remediating deficits, lesson planning was reframed as an opportunity to build from students' existing forms of capital. When designing activities related to peer relationships, conflict resolution, or emotion regulation, students were prompted to ask: "Whose ways of communicating, problem-solving, and caring are being centered?" and "How might these lessons honor the cultural strengths already present in students' communities?" By repeatedly engaging with these questions, students developed a habit of asset-based noticing that they carried across content areas. For instance, rather than interpreting frequent peer conversation as classroom disruption, students were encouraged to consider how collaborative communication and relational engagement may reflect forms of social and linguistic capital that could be harnessed through the UDL principles of providing multiple means of engagement, representation and expression (CAST, 2024).

PHASE 3: SCAFFOLDED PRACTICE

The guidance lesson course sessions were deliberately designed to build a CCW perspective gradually. Early weeks highlighted the school counselor's role as a classroom leader and examined culturally responsive methods for managing student behavior and engagement. Later sessions emphasized restorative practices and culturally responsive strategies to promote a positive school culture, explicitly connecting these methods to CCW's resistant and social forms of capital by viewing discipline as a form of collective repair rather than punishment. Later sessions also emphasized the importance of relationships, voice, and mutual accountability as core sources of strength. Mid-semester content introduced social-emotional learning (SEL) and state-level SEL initiatives, inviting students to analyze whether SEL frameworks reproduce individualistic, deficit-based assumptions or can be reimagined through a CCW lens. Students critiqued traditional SEL lessons that frame self-regulation as personal compliance and redesigned activities to reflect communal values, cultural expressions of emotion, and collective coping strategies. For example, students revised traditional self-regulation activities by incorporating collaborative reflection, cultural expressions of emotion, and peer support strategies rather than emphasizing quiet, individual compliance.

PHASE 4: AUTHENTIC ENACTMENT

The Developmental Classroom Guidance Project course assignment served as the primary vehicle for translating CCW into instructional design. Building from the ASCA classroom guidance lesson template, we adapted the format to include explicit sections of the community cultural wealth (CCW) and universal design for learning (UDL) frameworks (see Appendix A). The adapted template is based on the American School Counselor Association classroom guidance lesson format. Using this revised template, students designed multi-lesson units for elementary or middle school contexts with intentional alignment to both CCW and UDL. At each stage, school counseling students were prompted to articulate which forms of cultural wealth their lessons aimed to honor and activate (e.g., familial narratives, peer networks, resistant storytelling). This shift in lesson planning moved practice from remediation toward recognition, positioning K-12 students' cultural realities as the starting point for guidance instruction. Although CCW-informed pedagogy may align naturally with the ASCA standards related to inclusion, empathy, advocacy, and social awareness (ASCA, 2021, M 2, B-SS 2, B-SS 4, B-SS 6, B-SS 10), the framework described herein is intended to function as a cross-cutting pedagogical lens that can be integrated into a wide range of classroom guidance topics and ASCA standards.

Throughout the semester, CCW was used to structure each phase of the project, from lesson design to reflection. School counseling (SC) students were encouraged to engage with community knowledge, family stories, and cultural context, learning to identify and intentionally create lessons that respect and leverage the diverse cultural assets of their students' communities. Lesson plans required counseling students to identify how activities drew on specific forms of community cultural wealth and how multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression were embedded to ensure access for diverse learners. SC students implemented lessons centering connection, belonging, and cultural affirmation with their peers acting as K-12 students during experiential project class nights.

PHASE 5: REFLECTION AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY FORMATION

Through these layered experiences, CCW was transformed from a simple conceptual framework into a practical approach for observing, teaching, and personal growth. Counselors-in-training learned to approach Tier 1 classrooms not as sites of deficiency but as spaces rich with cultural wealth. In doing so, SC students started to build a professional identity rooted in recognition, relationality, and justice; this identity aligns with the ethical and developmental goals of school counseling during challenging sociopolitical periods (ASCA, 2022; Rahal, 2005; Ratts et al., 2016). This approach further reflects an ethical commitment to respond to learning and classroom diversity in ways that affirm K-12 students' cultural identities and avoid reproducing harm through deficit-based assumptions (ASCA, 2022; Yosso, 2005). By positioning cultural wealth as foundational to instruction, CCW-informed pedagogy fosters inclusive learning environments in which difference is treated as an asset rather than a liability.

Ethical Foundations of CCW-Integrated Teaching

The CCW-integrated design of our guidance lesson course was grounded in ethical commitments to safety, dignity, and belonging, particularly in a sociopolitical climate where equity-oriented discourse is contested, and minoritized voices may feel silenced or discouraged. We acknowledge that our perspectives are shaped by identity, lived experiences, and geographical region. As faculty members at a public university situated on an urban campus, we acknowledge that these experiences inform our teaching and scholarship. The demographics of the school counseling cohort skew heavily toward first-generation, students of color who consider themselves advocates for systematically disadvantaged populations of students. Author one is a first-generation Asian American, former international student, and current tenured faculty member. Author two is a first-generation, White, cisgender female faculty member who grew up in poverty but who is now situated firmly in the upper-middle class.

As instructors, we intentionally worked to foster learning environments that invited students to express and appreciate themselves as cultural beings. Trauma-informed principles were embedded throughout the course by offering flexible participation options, providing materials in advance so students knew what to expect, and structuring activities to support psychological safety. At the beginning of the course, we established classroom norms that emphasized restful dialogue, curiosity, and the expectation that differing perspectives would be explored rather than judged. We reinforced these norms by consistently modeling the ways we speak and how we interact with each other. We tried to model the relational and restorative stance students are expected to enact in K-12 schools. These choices reflected an ongoing awareness of how instructional design shapes power, belonging, and risk within the classroom.

Evaluation of Effectiveness and Assessment Methods

To evaluate the effectiveness of the CCW-informed instructional strategy and assess student learning, multiple sources of evidence were used, including a college-wide equity-focused midterm survey and performance-based assessment embedded within the Developmental Classroom Guidance Project course assignment.

COLLEGE-WIDE EQUITY-FOCUSED MIDTERM SURVEY

A voluntary, equity-focused midterm survey administered across the College of Education was used as one indicator of the instructional strategy's impact on students' learning experiences and perceptions of the classroom climate. The survey was intended to support faculty understanding of students' classroom experiences and guide ongoing pedagogical adjustments rather than serve as a formal research measure. Although the survey was not originally designed specifically for this course, it aligned closely with the goals of this CCW-informed pedagogy and provided meaningful formative feedback.

Survey items asked about students' perceptions of whether course content and instruction communicated that diverse identities and social positions (e.g., race, language, ability, gender identity, socioeconomic and legal status, and other forms of human difference) were valued. It also assessed students' sense of psychological safety when engaging in open and inclusive communication, their overall satisfaction with the course, and invited open-ended feedback on equity-related concerns and instructional suggestions.

Quantitative and qualitative student feedback was reviewed descriptively to identify recurring patterns related to belonging, perceived inclusivity, and comfort engaging in dialogue. Across the course offerings in which the survey was utilized, responses generally suggested that many students perceived the course as intentionally engaging issues related to diversity and social positions and that students experienced the classroom climate as supportive of open and inclusive communication. Open-ended feedback further reflected students' appreciation for opportunities to share lived experiences, engage with multiple perspectives, and participate in discussions that recognized cultural assets and affirmed diverse identities. Student feedback was used to inform ongoing instructional adjustments and to reflect on how CCW-informed teaching practices may contribute to an inclusive and affirming classroom environment in future courses.

DEVELOPMENTAL CLASSROOM GUIDANCE PROJECT

Student learning was assessed through multiple major course assignments; among these, the Developmental Classroom Guidance Project functioned as the primary performance-based evaluation of students' ability to translate CCW into concrete school counseling practice. In this project, students designed multi-lesson Tier 1 classroom guidance units aligned with ASCA standards. They were required to apply UDL principles to ensure accessibility and explicitly integrate CCW by identifying which forms of cultural capital their lessons aimed to honor and activate. Lesson plans and reflective components were evaluated using a rubric that assessed asset-based framing, cultural responsiveness, and alignment with CCW principles. We gave particular attention to the SC students' ability to move beyond deficit-oriented problem definitions and instead design instruction that centered on K-12 students' cultural strengths, relational resources, and community knowledge.

The survey data and project-based assessments together offered complementary insights into the effectiveness of the CCW-integrated instructional strategy. The survey reflected students' personal

experiences of the learning environment and their perceptions of inclusivity, while the guidance project showcased students' ability to apply CCW from theory into practical teaching via guidance lessons. This integrated method enabled an evaluation of both the classroom atmosphere created by CCW-informed teaching and the professional skills students gained as future school counselors.

Discussion & Implications

PEDAGOGICAL TENSIONS AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

When centering CCW as a foundational framework, particularly in classrooms with a high concentration of students of color, some students who held racial majority identities appeared hesitant to share or express pride in their own backgrounds. Early in training, some counselors-in-training appeared to interpret CCW as a framework intended only for individuals from marginalized backgrounds. This misperception reflects a broader risk, specifically that asset-based, equity-oriented frameworks may be misunderstood as exclusionary rather than expansive.

CCW, however, centers on how all individuals survive, adapt, and thrive within unequal systems, and how these processes generate forms of strength, knowledge, and resilience. Its pedagogical purpose is not to delimit who “has” culture but to broaden what counts as cultural wealth and to cultivate a shared language for recognizing assets across differences. This tension highlights the importance of intentional instructional framing. Counselor educators must explicitly communicate that CCW is a collective lens, one that positions every student as a cultural being and knowledge holder.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Instructors bear responsibility for creating learning environments in which counseling students feel psychologically safe to explore identity, power, and difference. Trauma-informed practices, such as offering flexible modes of participation, modeling curiosity over judgment, and establishing norms that resist blame-based discourse, are essential to supporting this work. Without such safeguards, some students may retreat into silence, misinterpret CCW as exclusionary, or disengage from reflective practice. While our practice has been to gather mid-term survey feedback from students about their experience of safety within the course, this data has purposefully been anonymous and de-identified. Unfortunately, that means we cannot determine whether students occupying different social positions (e.g., across racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and other identity dimensions) complete this survey at similar rates or whether perceptions of psychological safety differ across these groups. Additionally, because our counseling program's located in an urban, progressive, racially and ethnically diverse city, our mission, values, and application focus on social justice

and advocacy as key professional counseling dispositions; we recognize that our student demographics are unique and may differ from those of counseling programs in more rural, politically different, and/or less racially and ethnically diverse communities. It is unknown how this CCW-integrated strategy would be received in counseling programs with different demographic features. Future implementations should examine how instructors can more effectively scaffold students' understanding of CCW as an inclusive, relational framework that invites all learners into asset-based ways of seeing.

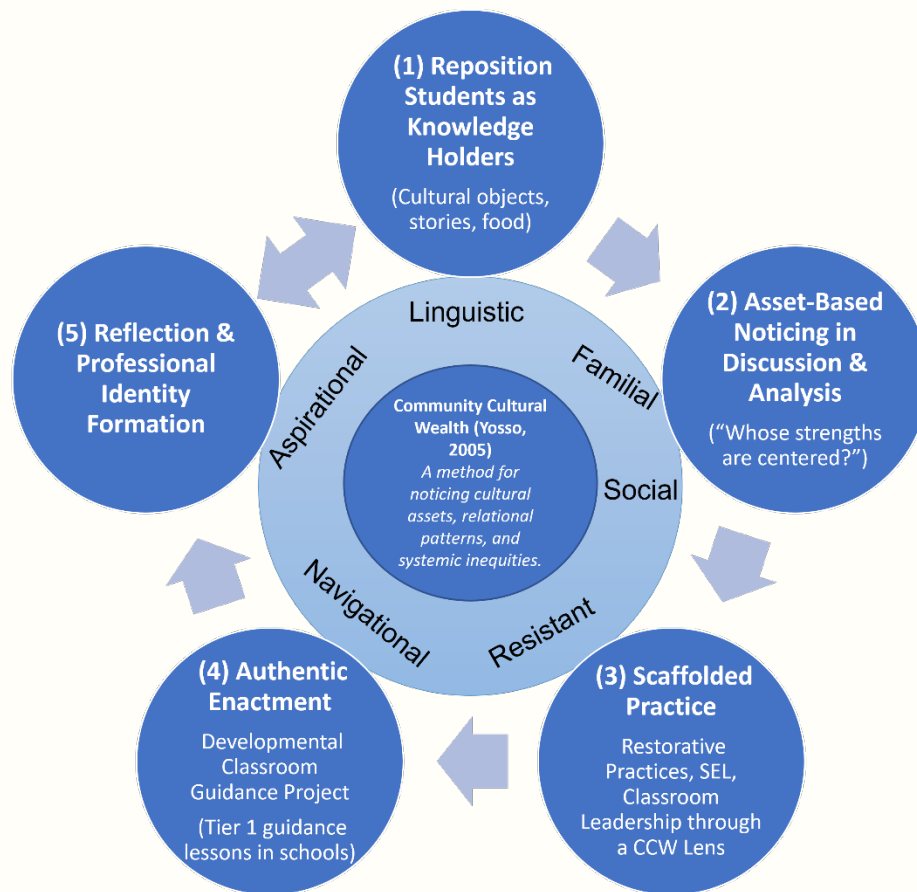
FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Although illustrated here within a school counseling course, the CCW pedagogical cycle is intentionally designed to be transferable across counselor education contexts. The five phases represent instructional moves rather than content-specific activities. Counselor educators in clinical mental health, marriage and family, or rehabilitation counseling can adapt each phase by substituting discipline-specific learning tasks while retaining the underlying pedagogical intent: repositioning students as knowledge holders, training asset-based noticing, scaffolding practice through CCW-aligned frameworks, creating authentic enactment opportunities, and supporting reflection and professional identity formation.

For example, this model has also been implemented in a career counseling course that enrolls students in school counseling, clinical mental health counseling, marriage and family counseling, and rehabilitation counseling. Students began that course by constructing a career journey detailing their own knowledge and lived experiences. As we examined career development theories, students are encouraged to examine whose voices and strengths are represented or may have been left out. In the middle phase, students dive into examining not only the career-related barriers that racially and ethnically diverse clients face but also the unique strengths and assets they bring to their workplaces and career journeys. The culminating project in that course involves students conducting a constructivist career interview (Savickas, 2019). Many questions within that interview lend themselves to developing a complete picture of a client, including cultural inspirations in the form of heroes or role models and counter-narratives to deficit-based thinking. Students complete a case conceptualization that highlights their client's cultural wealth and the impact on career goals.

Future directions for practice and research include testing the CCW pedagogical cycle across counselor education contexts and course types to examine its transferability beyond the guidance lesson course. Empirical research could examine how involvement in the five-phase cycle influences counselors-in-training's asset-based mindsets, cultural humility, and decision-making in instructional or clinical settings over time. Future studies should also consider how students from different positionalities and identities experience each phase, especially whether and how the cycle encourages participation among students occupying relatively privileged social positions across different identity dimensions. This research can help improve the CCW-integrated model, enhance its evidence base, and better understand how CCW serves as a resilient pedagogical framework in counselor education.

Figure 1. CCW Pedagogical Cycle



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Appendix A

CCW Guidance Lesson Plan Template (Adapted From the ASCA Lesson Plan Template)

Lesson Plan and Data Report

School Name			
School Counselor Name		School Year	2026
Lesson Title/Topic	Building Friendships in First Grade		
Participants	First Grade Students		
Setting – Lesson(s) will be delivered in:	☒ Classroom (Tier 1 whole-class instruction or Tier 2 specific classroom) ☐ Large Group (grade-level or multi-class instruction) ☐ Small groups (single session delivered to a group of students, ex., junior planning conferences) ☐ Individual (one-on-one student instruction) ex. senior credit checks		
Reason for this lesson: Select from each: Life-Readiness – select no more than one category Academic Success – select any category that applies	Life-Readiness ☐ Learning Strategies ☐ Self-Management Skills ☒ Social Skills	Academic Success ☒ Improve academic performance ☐ Meet benchmarks ☐ Improve test scores ☐ Meet promotion/graduation requirements	
	☒ Single Lesson ☐ Unit of Lessons: Lesson _____ of _____		

ASCA Student Standards, Objectives and Assessment Items for Lesson

Behavior Standard from ASCA Student Standards	Learning Objectives	Pre-/Post-Assessment Statements
M.1. Belief in the development of the whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional, and physical well-being. B-SS 2. Positive, respectful and supportive relationships with students who are similar to and different from them	Students will identify what it means to be a good friend.	1. What does it mean to be a good friend? 2.
	Students will practice ways to build and maintain friendships through kind actions and words.	1. Name one way you can be a good friend at school. 2. How do you feel when you are a good friend to someone else?

Materials:



Lesson Plan and Data Report

- Chart paper and markers
- Friendship word cards (e.g., kind, sharing, listening, helping, respectful)
- Markers or crayons
- Fish template for each student
- Colorful paper “scales”

Steps

1. Administer pre-assessment.
2. Record pre-assessment data. Optional data organizer can be used for this information (baseline data column under Life-Readiness.)

Describe how you will:

1. Introduce lesson and objective:

Begin by asking students, “What makes someone a good friend?” Write their responses on chart paper. Share that today’s lesson will focus on how we can be good friends and make our classroom a friendly, welcoming place.

“What are some things people can do to help others feel happy or welcome at school?”

After a few responses, ask:

“What do you think makes someone a really good friend?”

Write their answers on chart paper or the board (e.g., sharing, helping, playing nicely, kind words).

“Wow, those are great ideas! Today we’re going to talk about how we can all be good friends—and how to make our classroom a friendly, welcoming place for everyone.”

Clearly state the objectives: “Today, we will learn what it means to be a good friend. We’ll also practice ways to show kindness, include others, and build strong friendships with our classmates.”

Write or post the student-friendly objective:

I can name what makes someone a good friend and show friendly behavior at school.
2. Teach content:

Use visual friendship word cards (e.g., kind, share, listen, help) and introduce each word with a real-life example.

Use a short picture, “The Rainbow Fish,” to show examples of friendship in action.
3. Practice content:

Draw or Symbolize Acts of Kindness

Students write or draw one kind thing on each paper scale.

Use your board to model examples with simple words and drawings:

 - Say something kind



Lesson Plan and Data Report

- 🙌 Help a friend
- 😊 Include someone
- ❤️ Share a toy/supply

Practice the Action (Kindness in Motion!)

After they finish decorating their scales, students pick one act of kindness to practice in the classroom.

Ask:

"What's one kind action on your scale that you can practice right now?"

Examples:

- Invite someone new to play during free choice time
- Say something kind to a peer
- Offer to help a classmate clean up

4. Summarize:

Bring students together in a circle.

Ask: "What's one thing you're going to do to be a good friend this week?"

Go around the circle and let each student share.

Wrap-up:

"Let's remember—being a good friend means being kind, including others, and helping each other. Let's keep our classroom full of friendship every day!"

Accessibility Plan – How will the lesson be made accessible for ALL students.

Accessibility
Considerations
Using Universal
Design for Learning
(UDL) Framework:

Multiple Means of Engagement:

Use a mix of verbal discussion, visual cards, and hands-on activities to engage different learning styles.

Multiple Means of Representation:

Provide visual cues, such as the friendship word cards, and allow students to express themselves through drawing and writing on their friendship "scale". Students can write or draw on kindness scales; they also act out kind behaviors (verbal and non-verbal expressions).

Multiple Means of Action and Expression:

Offer different ways for students to share their thoughts, including speaking, drawing, and writing. Provide physical assistance if needed for students who have fine motor challenges.

- *Area to improve: could add choice and sensory/movement-based activities to meet different engagement needs.*



Lesson Plan and Data Report

Community Cultural Wealth–Informed Design (Please select at least one of the focus areas below to address in your lesson plan. You are not required to include all three, but I encourage you to be intentional in your selection and choose the area(s) most relevant to your lesson topic and the needs of your student population.)

Focus Area	How Is This Addressed in the Lesson Through a CCW Lens?
Cultural Sensitivity	How does this lesson honor students' cultural identities and activate forms of community cultural wealth (e.g., familial, linguistic, aspirational)? How are diverse identities (e.g., race, language, ability, family structure) acknowledged and respected? Things to consider: Encourage students to share friendship qualities from their own cultural backgrounds and emphasize that being a good friend looks different in different cultures. "Do different cultures show friendship in different ways?" and validate multiple expressions of kindness (e.g., touch, words, shared food, gift-giving).
Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)	How are SEL skills taught in ways that reflect students' cultural expressions of emotion, connection, and coping? Which CCW capitals are being leveraged? Students practice relationship skills, empathy, communication, and inclusion through discussion, reflection, and kindness activities. Rather than assuming a single "correct" way of expressing emotions or friendship, students are encouraged to recognize that people may show care and connection differently. The lesson leverages social capital through relationship-building and peer interaction and familial capital by drawing upon students' existing experiences and understandings of caring relationships.
Restorative Practices	How does the lesson create space for voice, relationship, and collective meaning-making? How are social and resistant capital supported? Closing circle includes student voice and reflection, promoting a sense of belonging and community. Things to consider: Frame the sharing circle as a restorative practice: "We sit in a circle because everyone belongs and everyone matters." Add a restorative language anchor like: "When you _____, I feel _____, and I need _____." (Introduce this gently at a first-grade level.) The lesson supports social capital by strengthening peer relationships, encouraging collaboration, and fostering a sense of belonging within the classroom community. Through classroom discussions and sharing



Lesson Plan and Data Report

	circles, students are also encouraged to recognize and value diverse experiences and perspectives related to friendship and connection.
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END OF PLAN

Note. Adapted from the *ASCA Lesson Plan Template*. Used with permission from the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) (permission granted Spring 2026).