



PART III
Creating Multicultural Classrooms

Educating for Equity and Social Justice: A Conceptual Model for Cultural Engagement

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This article presents an alternative approach to using service-learning courses to help students develop cultural competence. Service learning often comes from a deficit model that views the providers of a service as advantaged and the recipients as disadvantaged. The Conceptual Model for Cultural Engagement (CMCE) recognizes that those many deem as the disadvantaged have assets to share. The CMCE develops long-term, asset-based, reciprocal relationships between faculty members, community partners, and higher education students. During this relationship, all of the individuals actively participate in culturally engaged learning. The goal is to develop culturally effective members of our society who are educated to interact effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Some practice disciplines (e.g. social work, nursing, education) have intensely studied the role of service learning and cultural competence/competency. Commonalities in the definitions of cultural competence include

cultural knowledge, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity or attitudes, cultural encounters, and cultural skills (Campinha-Bacote, 2002; Lum, 2003). Professionals from various practice disciplines indicate the need for cultural competence in order to provide effective services to diverse populations. In the field of nursing, numerous scholars have devised models and frameworks for cultural assessment and intervention (Abrums & Leppa, 2001; Campinha-Bacote, 2002; Giger & Davidhizar, 2002; Kim-Goodwin, Clarke, & Barton, 2001; Leininger, 2002; Purnell, 2002). Similarly, Lum (2003) and Hurdle (2002) have also developed models in the field of social work. In addition, scholars of education have called for the preparation of culturally competent practitioners (Banks, 2001; Cochran-Smith, 2000; Lindsey, Nuri-Robins, & Terrell, 1999; Nieto, 2004; O'Grady, 2000).

Institutions of higher education often use service-learning courses as a way to assist students in developing cultural competence. For example, service learning is a valued pedagogical approach in health education for developing an awareness of diversity and the ability to interact with various ethnic and cultural groups (Flannery & Ward, 1999). Nevertheless, the basis of service learning is often a deficit model where students view themselves as the advantaged providing a service for

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those who society has deemed disadvantaged. Therefore, the focus of the service learning is on the deficiencies in the community. Examples include tutoring inner city students, doing taxes for an underprivileged group, or performing health examinations for senior citizens. This kind of service equates to what Nieto (2000) terms a “feel good approach.” Some scholars (e.g., Nieto, 2000; Rosenberger, 2000; O’Grady 2000) indicate that the current models of service learning reinforce the idea of privilege and power within our society and sustain the hegemonic power of the elite. Nieto argues that society views the primary recipients of service as disadvantaged, whether it is by race, class, ethnicity, or ability, and those who serve may be privileged. She suggests that concerns about racism, injustice, oppression, and unearned privileges should be important aspects of service learning. Furthermore, a number of scholars in the field (e.g., Anderson & Guest, 1994; Battistoni, 2002; Berry, 1990; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Waldock, 1995) offer cautions about strengthening rather than reducing stereotypes in students during their service experiences. They indicate mounting evidence, which suggests that service learning not only fails to connect students to public life, but also may reinforce student stereotypes about people who are different. O’Grady (2000) warns that if service learning is not organized and delivered with careful planning, it can easily reinforce oppressive outcomes.

. . . the basis of service learning is often a deficit model where students view themselves as the advantaged, providing a service for those whom society has deemed disadvantaged. . . (and so) the focus of the service learning is on the deficiencies in the community.

A new model of service learning should embrace what Rosenberger (2000) terms the Freirean approach, whereby people establish service-learning relationships that are nonhierarchical in nature, collaborative, and empowering to all stakeholders. This approach does not embark on missionary work in an academic setting in the name of service learning. Instead, it has people work cooperatively, build reciprocal relationships, listen, and learn from each other so that together they can right injustices and correct inequalities.

We need to move beyond rhetoric and sporadic implementation to institutionalization of cultural competence. Therefore, the authors in collaboration with Jan Goings, Shelagh Larkin, and Kathleen Smythe (professors in special education, social work, and history, respectively) from Xavier University developed the Conceptual Model for Cultural Engagement (CMCE). This model comes from an asset-based perspective with all individuals actively engaged in learning. The goal is to have individuals reach a level of cultural effectiveness that supports positive interactions with the diverse populations.

The theoretical base for the CMCE comes from three bodies of knowledge. The synthesis of the review of the literature regarding asset-based community building, service learning, and cultural competence indicates a need to move from a traditional to an alternative approach of increasing students’ cultural effectiveness. The authors believe that pedagogical efforts to help students grow toward cultural effectiveness need to happen in a variety of higher education courses and not be limited to those specifically identified as multicultural education classes.

There are two desired outcomes for applying the CMCE to a course. The first is to increase the cultural effectiveness of the faculty member, community partner, students, and community members. The second is to have positive change in our society by increasing individuals’ cultural effectiveness. Once individuals are more culturally effective, they can become system change agents. Positive change in our society can lead to a more equitable and socially just society for all people.

Paradigm Shift

The review of the literature indicates that there are many approaches to service learning and building cultural competence. However, there appears to be a lack of models that combined service learning and cultural competence from an asset-based perspective. The deficit model approach tends to be a major part of current models where students are seen as the “haves” and the recipients as the “have nots.” The focus is on the needs, problems, and deficiencies of individuals and communities. The student is the provider of the service and the community member is the recipient. As a result, students may not view the community members as individuals who can provide information from a different but valuable perspective. Having the students as the recipients and the community as the provider of knowledge and information is not part of the current equation. Our society currently centers on the Eurocentric perspective in which many believe that the underprivileged, the poor, and the disadvantaged have nothing to offer because their opinions do not count or are devalued. Building cultural competence need not take this approach. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) suggest

that all communities regardless of their disadvantages have assets.

The synthesis of the literature review and anecdotal evidence of the need for students to increase their cultural competence led to the development of the Conceptual Model for Cultural Engagement (CMCE). This model approaches increasing cultural effectiveness from an asset-based perspective that views all participants as capable of making valuable contributions.

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A Conceptual Model for Cultural Engagement

The CMCE develops long-term interactive relationships between faculty, students, and communities from an asset-based perspective. This perspective acknowledges that each individual comes from a culture that has a significant number of assets and/or strengths. The focus of the relationship is on individuals viewing one another from this assets/strengths perspective. Individuals in this relationship are active participants in the process of growing toward cultural effectiveness. Participants, culturally engaged learning, and cultural effectiveness are specific terms used to describe how the model works when applying it to a higher education course.

Participants

The term “participant” describes the faculty member, community partner, students, and community members

involved in a course applying the CMCE. Choosing to apply or become involved with a higher education course that uses this model requires a significant level of commitment and involvement. The faculty member, community partner, and community members will naturally have the choice of becoming participants. However, the students may not necessarily have that choice. Therefore, some may argue that students need a choice to participate while others might contend that all students need to increase their ability to work and live effectively with diverse populations. The authors suggest that being a participant in a course applying the CMCE is different from participating in a traditional service-learning course.

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Culturally Engaged Learning

The authors coined the term culturally engaged learning (CEL) during the development of the model. CEL occurs during planned experiences that are different from service-learning experiences. Typically, in a service-learning experience, the faculty member identifies a community setting in which students can provide a service based on the needs of the community. Even if the community partner and faculty member collaboratively decide on the needs, the approach is still from a deficit model. Once identified, the community setting and service provided generally remain the same each time the faculty member teaches the course. In addition, the faculty member’s relationship with the community partner may be limited to phone calls to assure that students may continue providing a specific service in a particular setting.

In a course applying the CMCE, a long-term interactive relationship develops among the community partner, faculty member, community members, and students during the CEL experiences. Furthermore, a reciprocal teaching/learning engagement occurs. The community partner and faculty member spend time with students

during the CEL experiences that occur in the classroom and nontraditional community settings. Community settings may change based on the learning needs of the students, the course content, and the level of cultural effectiveness the students are demonstrating.

The following is a specific example of CEL experiences within an early childhood education (ECE) course and a Hispanic community. Inclusion of young children, birth through age 8, with disabilities in regular classrooms is considered best practice. Therefore, students who are in early childhood teacher education programs need to learn how to work effectively with families and young children with disabilities. Application of the CMCE to an ECE course designed to have students learn effective teaching strategies for children with disabilities can also allow the ECE students to increase their cultural effectiveness when working with Hispanic families.

The students have CEL experiences as they interact several times with the Hispanic community partner and the faculty member in the college classroom. They begin by learning universal concepts regarding the Hispanic population and continue as they reflect on what they are learning from the Hispanic community members. When the students go into the Hispanic community, they engage with community members who have children with disabilities. The community setting can be in the families' homes, place of worship, or at recreational and community events. In these settings, the families share their perspective of raising a young child with a disability within their community and educational system. The ECE students use the knowledge they gain from studying the course content to adapt teaching strategies to meet the specific needs of a Hispanic child with a disability and who uses English as a second language.

Cultural Effectiveness

Storti (2001) describes becoming culturally effective as seeing the world as others do and trying to understand how others view you. Therefore, the person is able to see the world from a new perspective. Storti's focus was on ways to help Americans who are living and working overseas become more culturally effective. The authors applied his concept to helping higher education students living within the United States learn how to interact more effectively with our society's diverse populations.

Culturally effective people interact with others from the perspective of each person's particular view of what his/her culture considers appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Furthermore, culturally effective people will know how others from diverse backgrounds view them and their behaviors. As Storti (2001) indicated, it does not mean that one must accept all other cultures' behaviors and practices as right or wrong. However, culturally

effective people are aware of the impact their behavior has on others and the behaviors of others on them. They use this knowledge when interacting with diverse populations and may decide to change their behaviors in order to interact more effectively with others. In addition, they may decide to change their view of people from other cultures based on their knowledge about that culture.

Model Assumptions

The CMCE has five main assumptions. These assumptions relate to the active role of the participants, course content, pedagogy, asset-based community relationship building, and the embedded reflection periods in the CEL experiences.

Participants

The CMCE requires four specific active participants. The participants in this model include the community partner, community members, faculty member, and students. The community partner and community members are primary stakeholders. They actually live and take part in the life of the community. The community partner can easily identify the strengths her/his community has and wants the opportunity to share these assets with others.

The community partner has a desire to collaborate with faculty from higher education and views herself/himself as a teacher as well as a learner. In addition, she/he is willing to take the time necessary to build a collaborative relationship with the faculty member before, during, and after the model has been applied to a particular course. Community members who agree to engage with the students, faculty member, and community partner will range in age, have a variety of educational backgrounds, and have a range of life experiences and responsibilities.

The term faculty member includes any person teaching higher education courses. The faculty member is willing to take the time necessary to build a long-term collaborative relationship with the community partner. The faculty member views herself/himself as a learner as well as a teacher and views communities from an asset-based versus a deficit model. Moreover, she/he appreciates the need to have a paradigm shift from the traditional service learning deficit model approach.

The students are those taking undergraduate or graduate level courses in institutions of higher education. Students who choose to enroll in a course that is applying the CMCE have unique characteristics. They will be students who enjoy being an active learner within and

Table 1. Integrated Course and Culturally Engaged Learning (CEL) Objectives

<i>Original Course Objectives</i>	+ CEL Objectives	= Integrated Objectives
The student will demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies confirmed to be effective when facilitating learning for children with specific disabilities.	The student will demonstrate knowledge of the Hispanic cultural perspective regarding children with disabilities.	The student will demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies demonstrated to be effective when facilitating learning for children with specific disabilities from a Hispanic culture.
The student will demonstrate the ability to develop and implement different teaching strategies to meet the individual learning needs of children who are at various developmental/knowledge levels within an inclusive early childhood classroom.	The student will demonstrate the ability to develop and implement different teaching strategies that are specifically effective for working with Hispanic children who use English as a second language (ESL).	The student will demonstrate the ability to develop and implement different teaching strategies to meet the individual learning needs of an ESL Hispanic child who is not currently at grade level for a specific academic content area.
The student will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation for how the rich diverse culture and language backgrounds within the United States influences a child's development and learning.	The student will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation for the Hispanic culture's perspective of rearing children.	The student will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation for how the rich diverse culture and language background of Hispanic families within the USA influence a child's development and learning.

beyond the boundaries of the college classroom. They will appreciate that active learning requires a significant amount of time and commitment that often goes beyond what they do in more traditional college courses. Yet, they are willing to invest that additional effort because they want to learn how to create positive change in our society. These students are ones who want faculty to challenge them to think critically about the course content as well as the social realities of the world in which they currently live.

Course Content

The basic goals and objectives of an established course remain the same so that the course content is covered. This is especially important for required courses in programs or departments that are preparing future discipline-specific professionals (e.g., nurses, teachers, social workers, counselors, etc.). These programs often must meet explicit standards to attain state or national accreditation. The design of the CMCE allows the course to continue to meet those standards. Moreover, it may specifically address any diversity standard that a program must meet (e.g., National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), 2002, p. 29–32). However, the way the students learn the content may be different.

The faculty and community partner integrate the original course objectives with CEL objectives. The integrated objectives indicate what the students will be able to do after they have completed the course. The students need to demonstrate skills that indicate mastery of the course content knowledge and an increase in

their cultural effectiveness. Table 1 gives three examples of integrating original course objectives with CEL objectives. The CEL objectives and integrated objectives come from the previous example of students in this course engaging with Hispanic families who have children with disabilities.

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Pedagogy

The CMCE method of pedagogy aligns closely with the social constructivist approach for teaching adult learners. From the perspective of this model, the constructivist approach to teaching and learning relates to Vygotsky's (1962) theory of the importance of social interaction to the learning process. The students construct their course content knowledge by being actively engaged in learning and completing assignments that indicate mastery of the specific integrated course objectives. The CEL provides concrete classroom and community experiences that enhance this learning process.

This approach increases the students' critical thinking skills and the likelihood that they will become active participants in their learning. Therefore, students may more readily retain the knowledge they gained from taking the course. This includes the course content knowledge as well as the knowledge about a different culture.

Asset-Based Community Relationship Building

The application of the CMCE begins with the relationship the faculty member and community partner build. This relationship is more than finding a community experience for students to interact with a diverse population. The faculty member and community partner need to come to a collaborative understanding of how to apply the model to a specific course. They accomplish this through sharing responsibility for course development, accountability for student progress, and authority in determining how and where the students meet the integrated objectives.

The faculty member and community partner share the responsibility of integrating the course and CEL objectives. Both are responsible and accountable for making sure that the students meet the integrated objectives. They collaborate on determining assignments and evaluation methods that will facilitate the students learning the course content knowledge and growing toward cultural effectiveness.

The choice of community settings depends on the course content. The previous example of the ECE course on meeting the individual needs of young children needs to take place in settings with families who have children with disabilities. A course in accounting needs to take place in a setting where the community members keep financial records. The setting does not require the student to fulfill a need or provide a service. As a result, students learn the way that a particular community cares for children with disabilities or handles their finances. This would provide an opportunity for the students to grow in cultural effectiveness. They begin to see the world from the perspective of how a different community rear children with disabilities or manages their money.

Embedded Reflection Periods

The purpose of the CEL experiences is to expand the participants worldview; however, coping with the reality of cultural differences may be challenging or cause distress. The CMCE uses pre-experience, ongoing experience, and post-experience reflection periods. Embedding reflection periods into the model help students cope with cultural differences and connect what they are learning with the integrated objectives.

In addition, the reflection periods give the faculty member and community partner opportunities to identify benchmarks that indicate the students' growth toward cultural effectiveness. The students take pre-test measurements at the beginning of the course and post test measurements at the end of the course. These measures may be quantitative or qualitative. However, they need to be more than an attitudinal survey. From the authors' perspective, students often know how to answer attitudinal surveys to indicate cultural awareness or sensitivity. Nevertheless, the results of the students survey responses do not always align with how they actually interact with others from diverse populations.

The pre-experience reflection occurs before students go into the community setting. The faculty member and community partner introduce universal concepts regarding this community's culture. In addition, the community partner introduces specifics about her/his particular population. During this period, the students reflect on their current thoughts about that particular population's culture as well as their thoughts about their own culture. In addition, the faculty member and community partner explain how the CEL experiences relate to the integrated course objectives.

The ongoing experience reflection period uses reflection facilitators and takes place in the classroom or community setting. These facilitators are the faculty member or the community partner. The purpose of this reflection period is to help students reveal what they are learning about the community. In addition, this reflection period provides an opportunity for the faculty and community partner to identify the benchmarks that indicate students' growth toward cultural effectiveness. The amount of time and setting for the reflection will vary based on the needs of the participants.

The post-experience reflection helps assure that participants are successfully adjusting to the cultural differences they experienced while taking the course. Once the course is completed, the CMCE provides ongoing monthly opportunities that encourage students to connect and reflect with each other, the faculty member, and community partner on their CEL experiences. The meeting place will alternate between the campus and community setting. By alternating the setting, students will have the opportunity to interact with community members they had developed a relationship with during the CEL experiences.

Application of the Conceptual Model for Cultural Engagement

The Conceptual Model for Cultural Engagement provides for a continuous reciprocal relationship between the participants. It begins with the faculty member and community partner building their relationship (see

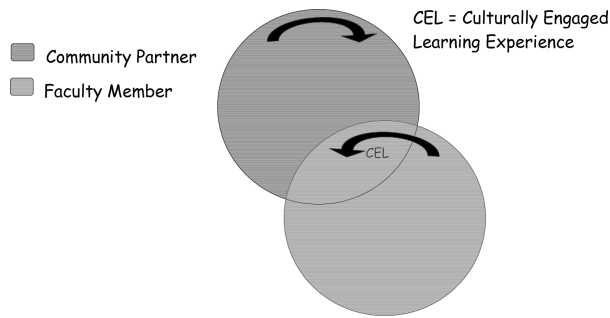


Figure 1. Faculty and community initiation of relationship.

Figure 1). This dynamic ongoing relationship develops and changes over time. During the initial period, the faculty member and community partner work to: (a) establish integrated course and culturally engaged learning objectives, (b) identify places in the community where the CEL experiences will take place, and (c) determine methods to assess students' course content knowledge and progression toward cultural effectiveness. The course becomes available to students after the faculty member and community partner have established their relationship and redeveloped the course by applying the CMCE.

The students first meet with the faculty member (see Figure 2). The faculty member introduces the course content to be covered and the concepts of the CMCE during the initial class meeting. This provides an opportunity for the faculty member to discuss how the integrated course objectives meet the course content at the same time students are becoming more culturally effective.

The community partner then meets with the faculty member and students early in the beginning of the course (see Figure 3). During this time, the faculty member and community partner introduce students to universal and specific information about the community's culture. Together they have a pre-experience reflection with the

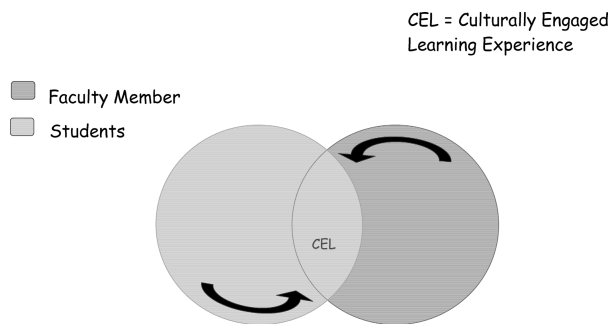


Figure 2. Faculty student initiation of relationship.

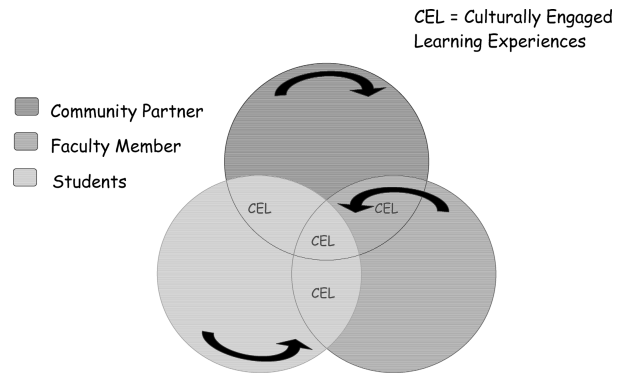


Figure 3. A conceptual model for cultural engagement.

students. Students spend time reflecting on their own culture and any misconceptions they may have about the culture of the community with which they will be interacting. After this initial period, the student goes into the community setting previously identified by the faculty member and community partner and begins engaging with community members who have agreed to be participants in the CMCE.

As Figure 3 indicates, this is an ongoing reciprocal relationship with numerous opportunities for CEL experiences. Each participant has opportunities throughout the experience to spend time with just one other participant and time together as a group. The students return to the classroom and the community settings several times throughout the course as they continue their CEL experiences. The ongoing reflection time allows students to connect what they are learning about the diverse population's culture to what they are learning about the course content.

Discussion

The CMCE is ready for pilot tests. The next steps include developing an asset-based relationship with a community partner and applying the model to a higher education course. Interested faculty members can apply the CMCE as a pilot test using the information gained from this article. Since the authors are also planning on pilot testing the model, we would appreciate feedback from faculty members and community partners who use the model. The faculty member and community partner can use the benchmarks identified during the reflection periods as pre- and post-test measures of students' cultural effectiveness. The goal of these initial pilot tests is to determine if the students are demonstrating the skills necessary to indicate that they are successfully mastering course content knowledge in addition to indications of their growth toward cultural.

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