

University of Nebraska at Omaha

From the Selected Works of Sandra Rodriguez-Arroyo

Fall November, 2015

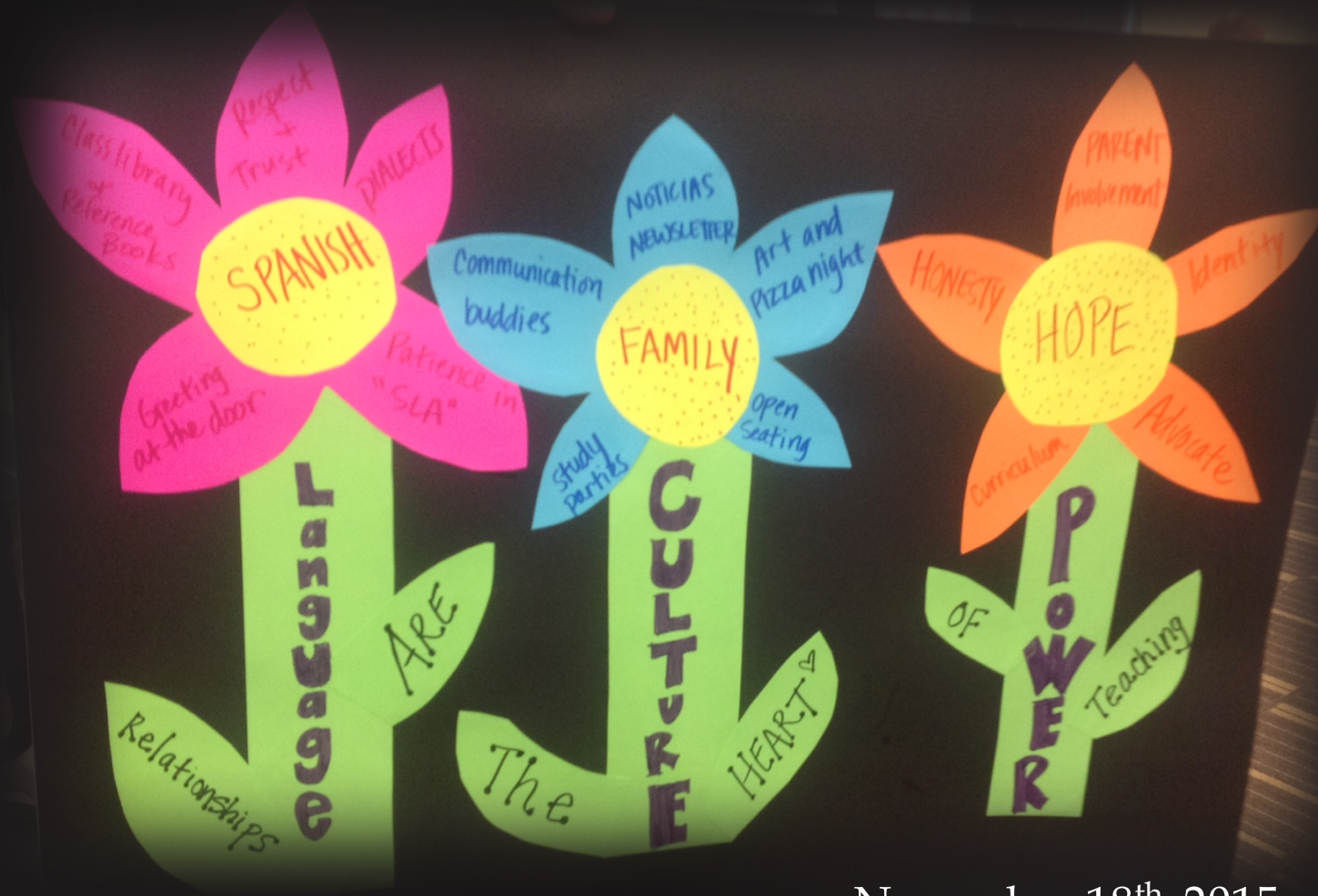
I learned more from them than they did from me: Shifting from deficit to asset-based perspectives in service-learning

Sandra Rodriguez-Arroyo

Available at: <http://works.bepress.com/srarroyo/S/>



*I learned more from them than they did from me:
Shifting from deficit to asset-based perspectives in service-learning*



November 18th, 2015

Sandra Rodriguez-Arroyo, D.Ed.

IARSLCE 2015

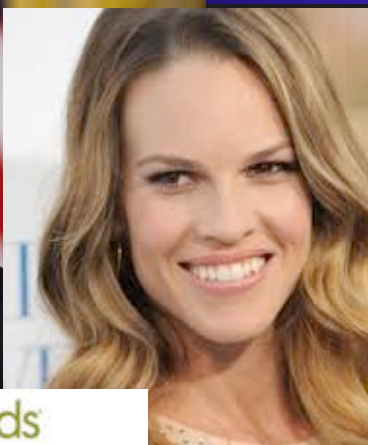
MY TEACHING CONTEXT



<http://www.cockeyed.com/travel/omaha/>

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/usa/states/nebraska/omaha01.html>

Background





LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND POWER

Course description: Issues directly related to the cultural, historical, political, and economic aspects of language and questions of schooling will be addressed. Connections will be made between these issues and literacy, bilingual development, and other dimensions of linguistic development. Graduate students will make connections to other fields of study relevant to their own discipline; and study how language, culture, and power impact learning for English language learners (ELLs) in school settings.

Background

- Inservice teachers enroll in this 4-week summer graduate seminar to fulfill the diversity requirement for their graduate degrees or as part of the coursework required for their ESL endorsement.
- Service-learning experience has been part of this course since the summer of 2007.
- The community partner is a non-profit youth organization located in the heart of a Midwest Latino neighborhood that many of the inservice teachers have never visited.
- The community partner has not changed, but the project's focus changes every year depending on the needs of the community partner and the course objectives.



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT FOCUS- SUMMER 2014



The teachers worked one-on-one with Latino tweens (10-12 year olds) to take pictures of locations, symbols, and other artifacts that represented the students' Latino community. The tweens then prepared and presented an interactive poster showing what their Latino community meant for them. The teachers also visited 3 community organizations to know more about the Latino culture in Omaha.

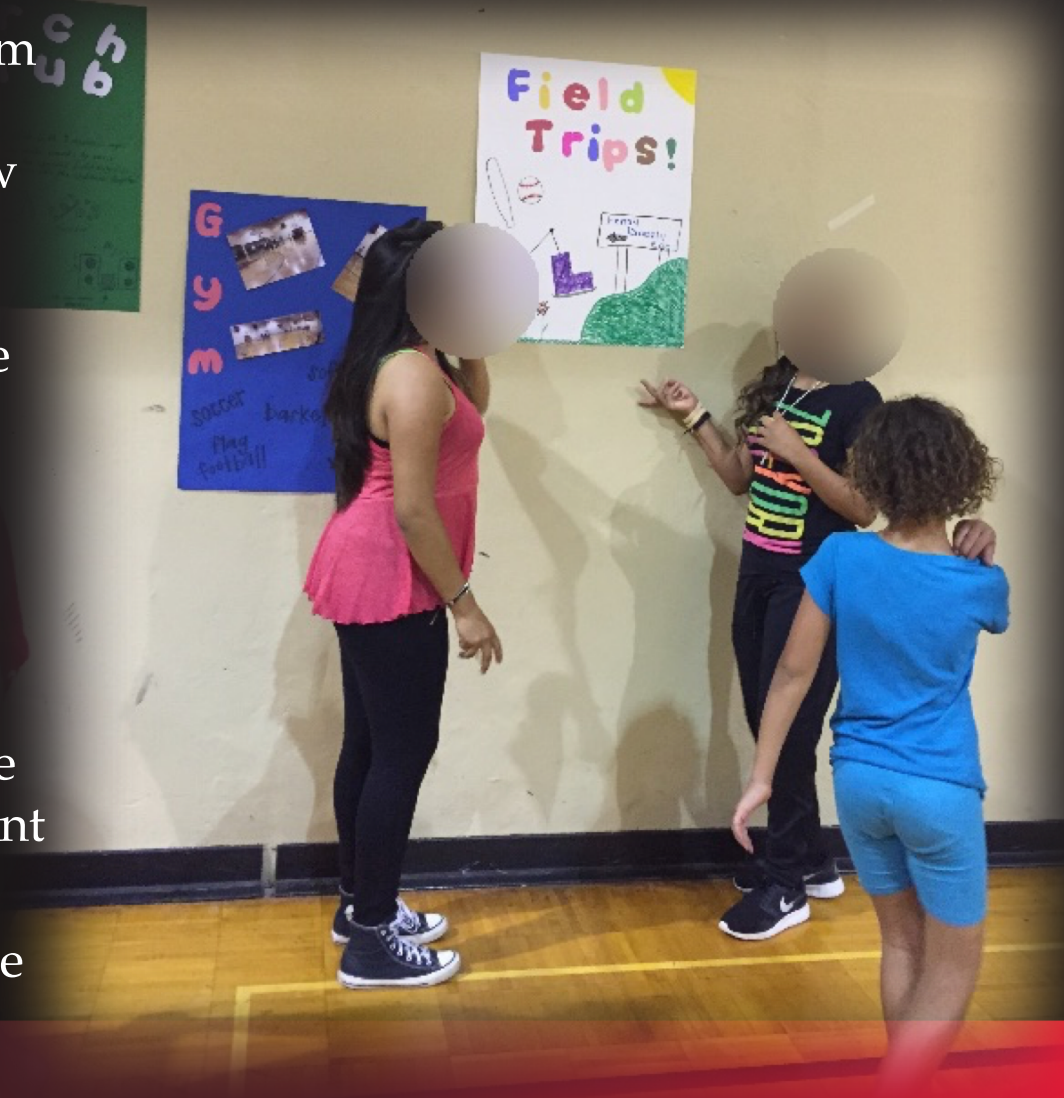


UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT FOCUS- SUMMER 2015

The teachers worked with the tweens on a “Welcome Back/Welcome Home” program for former BGClub members who had not recently attended the Club or to invite new members. The youth organization has a capacity for 325 members and they only had 225 at the moment. The teachers were partnered 1-1 or 1-2 with tweens to guide and support the tweens to:

- ❖ Take responsibility for the success of their club
- ❖ Be experts on the topic
- ❖ Create promotional materials to invite former and new members to final event
- ❖ Develop a program to promote the organization/its impact to enroll more members





CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT (CMCE)

HESS, LANIG, & VAUGHAN, 2007

- CMCE “comes from an asset-based perspective with all individuals actively engaged in learning” and its main goal is to cultivate cultural effectiveness among university students, so that they develop positive interactions with diverse communities.... People work cooperatively, build reciprocal relationships, listen, and learn from each other so that together they can right injustices and correct inequalities” (Hess, Lanig, & Vaughan, 2007, p. 33).
- “This model approaches increasing cultural effectiveness from an asset-based perspective that views all participants as capable of making valuable contributions” (p. 34).



CMCE

Participants

faculty member
community partner
undergraduate/graduate students
community members

Seeing the world as
others do and trying
to understand how
others view you
(Storti, 2001)

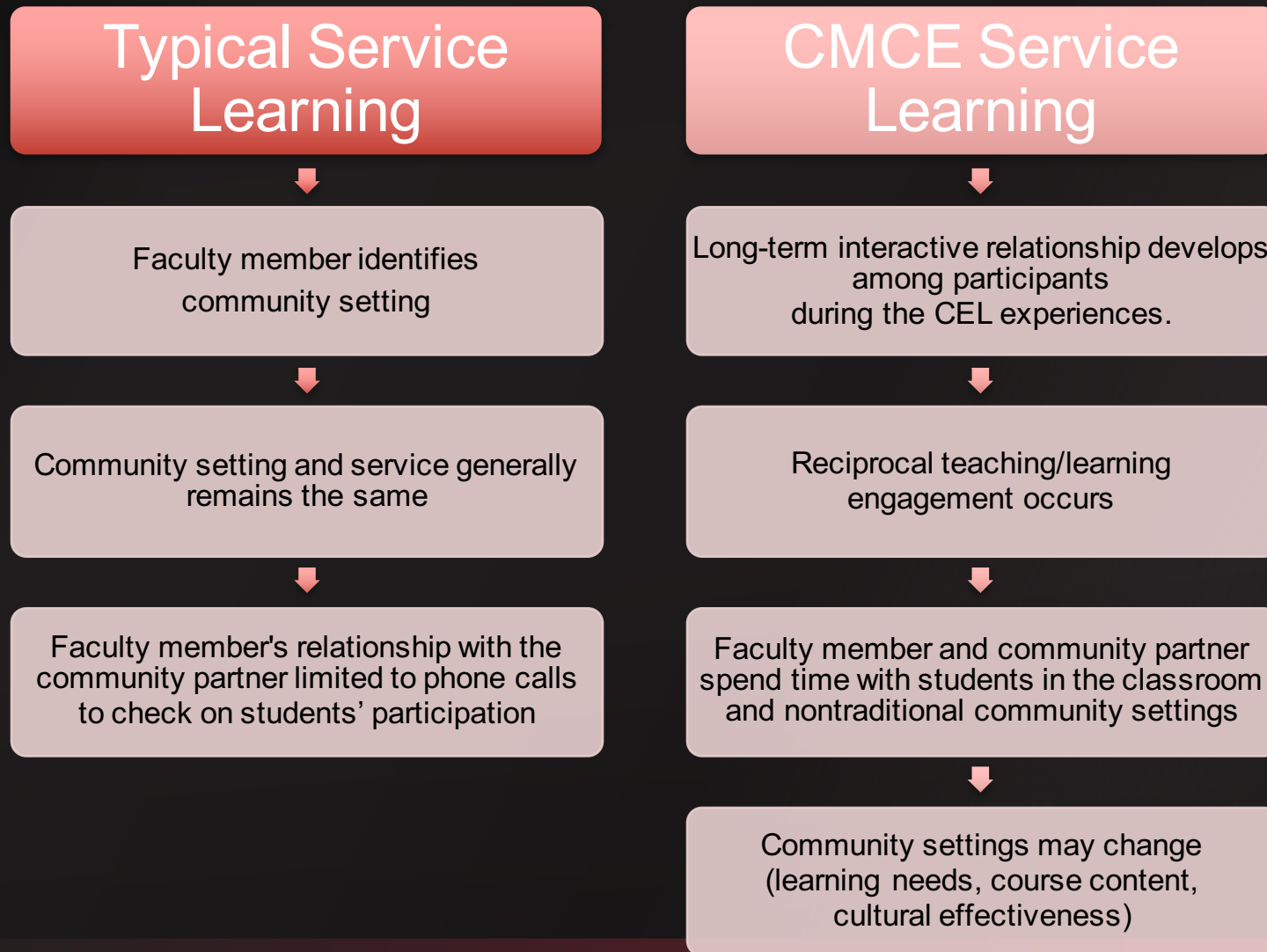
Cultural
Effectiveness

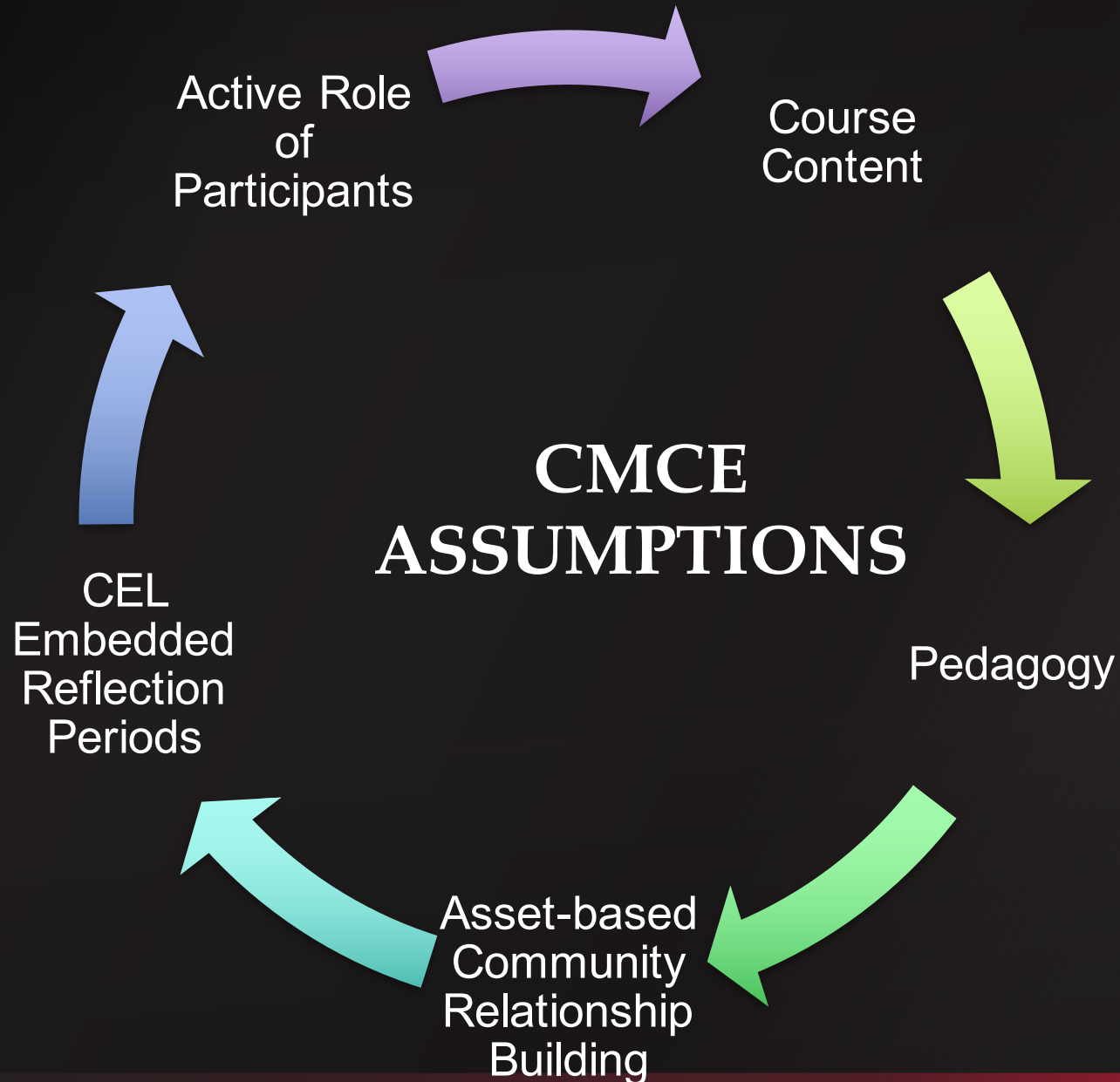
Culturally
Engaged
Learning
(CEL)

Students' interactions
with community
partners, faculty
members, learning
universal concepts
regarding cultural group,
and direct learning from
community members



CULTURALLY ENGAGED LEARNING







DATA COLLECTION

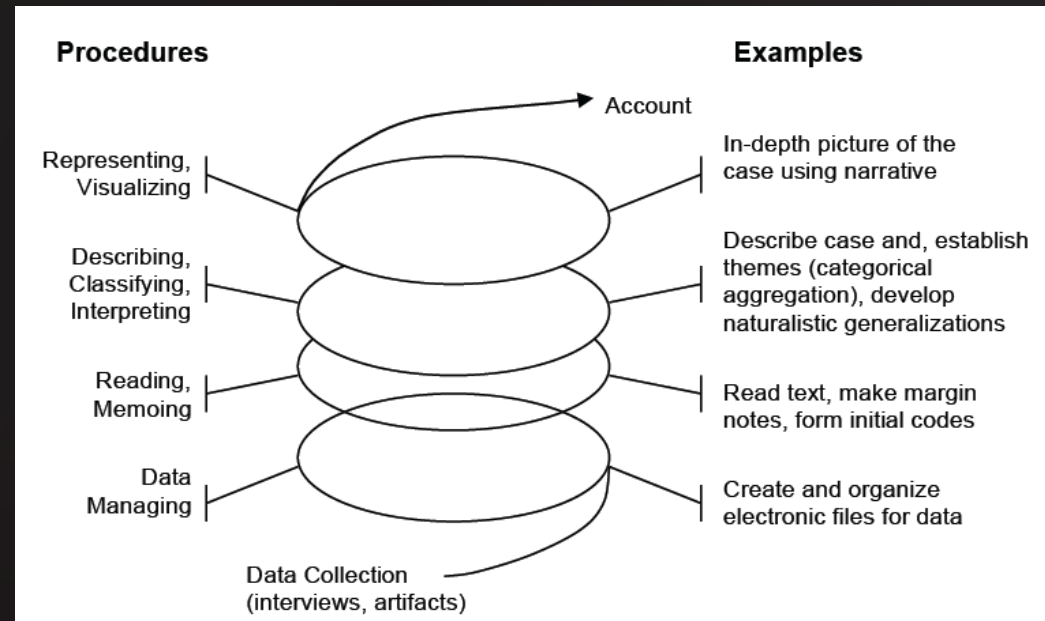
- *Research Objective:* Explore the implementation of a CMCE service learning experience to develop an asset-based perspective towards working with diverse learners and their communities.
- *Research Design:*
 - Case study research study (Stake, 1995)

	Summer 2014	Summer 2015
# of meetings	6 meetings	6 meetings
# of participants	15 White inservice teachers (9 females, 6 males).	15 total 11- White/4 diverse cultural backgrounds 10 White females, 1 White Male, 1 Latino Male, 1 African student from Zimbabwe, 1 Biracial female (Latina/Irish American), 1 Chinese female

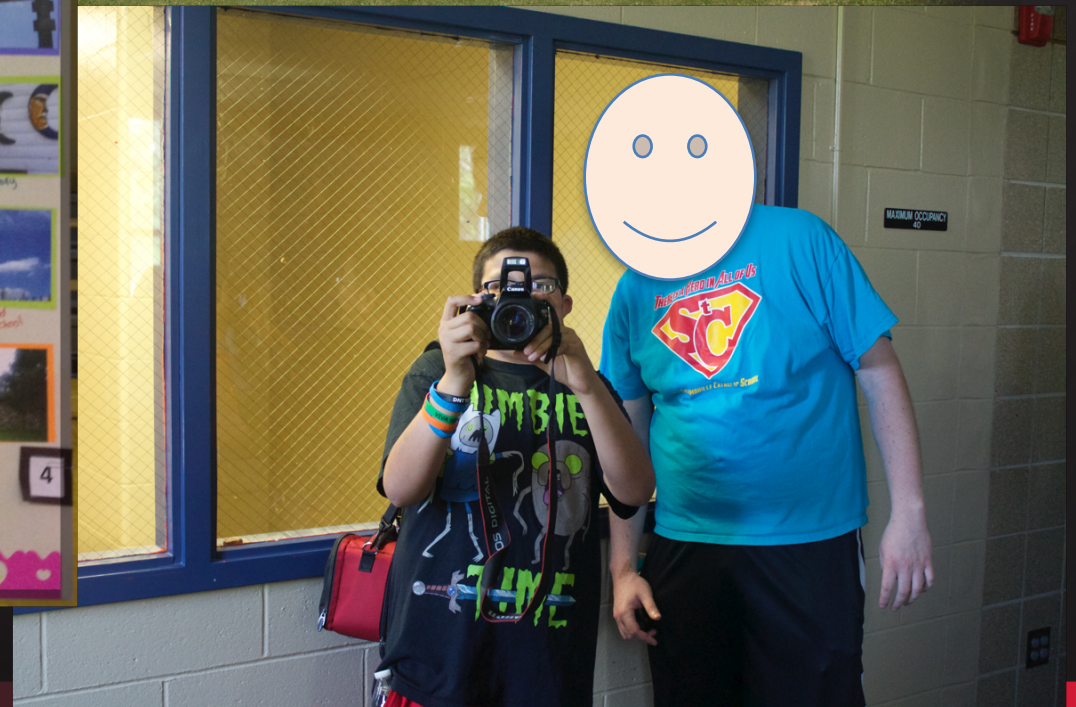


DATA SOURCES AND ANALYSIS

- Researcher's fieldnotes
- Course requirements (syllabus, reading responses, service learning reflections, final paper)
- The data was analyzed looking for the CMCE assumptions as the themes.



Creswell's spiral data analysis process (2007, p. 150).



RESULTS



COURSE CONTENT

Integrated Course and Culturally Engaged Learning (CEL) Objectives

- Graduate students will build reciprocal relationships with diverse learners, their families, and their community through a service-learning experience.
- Through working with diverse learners, graduate students will examine and identify concepts such as funds of knowledge, collaborative relations of power, and social justice to see themselves as educators who are language decision makers and negotiators.



PEDAGOGY

Constructing new knowledge-course content knowledge as well as the knowledge about a different culture.

“Kathy showed me South Omaha, which I knew nothing about. She took me around showing her comfort zone and the many cultures around us. There are no sufficient words to describe the project. It was more than learning, it was an experience that allowed me to see another special part of Omaha. I was humbled, captivated, and well informed each week. We meshed well together which can be hard when sporadically paired with someone.

In class we talked about how languages, culture, and power are related. Are they even related? I saw it as your own language and culture can give you power and strength to have an identity of your own. It's security in knowing that assimilation is not imperative and keeping your primary culture is what establishes your character. With this project I was able to see the identity of my student but also the other kids doing their presentation. The children seem to be proud of their language and culture. This can give them the power to be who they are with pride. Some people do not realize how special it is to have the many cultures we do in Omaha. The class and the service learning project has opened my eyes regarding situations in life and all aspects regarding language, culture, and power.”

Alyssa, 2014



ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

“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” (p. 37).

“I really appreciated the obvious relationship Dr. Rodriguez Arroyo already had established with the youth organization (as well as at the other venues we visited on our days off campus)! Everyone we met greeted us with such warmth and were excited to share the work they were doing. We were encouraged to dig in and get involved, and we had the benefit of knowing that we were working toward an outcome that was happily anticipated. We were never made to feel in the way, but neither could we see the way that the organization works and not recognize the assets that are in place. I think the team that planned our service learning definitely lived up to the model. There was a relationship between our professor and the youth organization: they determined the need they would like us to help them work toward, and we did our best with the short amount of time in a four-week course.”

(Lucy, 2015)



Community partner,
community members,
faculty member, and
students.

ACTIVE ROLE OF PARTICIPANTS

“I hate to say, but my age also has helped because this experience was not something to ‘better my resume’ and I had an overall better attitude than when I was 20. Prior to meeting my student I made a laundry list of questions I could possibly ask for ‘getting to know you activities.’ This was helpful in easing any potential awkward moments. Because of all the questions on the first day I believe we were able to connect on lots of different topics and made the relationship grow easily from the start.” (Kate, 2014)

“The first thing I noticed is that after only four weeks of class I know and feel comfortable with the other students in the class more than I did with students in 18 week classes.... It was so nice getting to know Karla on a level that I wouldn’t necessarily get to if she was one of my 210 students. I am glad I got to work with her and learn some of her story.” (John, 2014)



"This new girl is very quiet at first, shy and just unassuming to what is going on. I can relate to that because I was like that as well as a child. Once she was just with me and felt comfortable, it was a different story. The student was open, and willing to share stories with me. While walking around with my girl on 24th Street, she was telling me lots of stories about her experiences. My girl then got into telling me her parents love South Omaha, the 24th Street area because it reminds them of Mexico. She had such a history and many stories behind every shop that related to her growing up there. Her memories were detailed and it was great to see her open up about them to me. I could sense as we kept walking, she was trusting me more and wanting to tell me more. I can very much relate to the student; once I am in my comfort zone my walls will come down allowing me to open up. Miss Claudia had mentioned how my girl was shy and we needed to break her of that. I felt that yes she may come across as that but it's different once you get her to let down her walls. I completely get where the girl is coming from, that was me when I was young." (Alyssa, 2014)

"Kathy rocked her presentation today at Boys and Girls Club. I was beyond proud of her and how she presented her work. It was great to see how she spoke clearly to others and was just in a new comfort zone. I asked Kathy if she was nervous when being asked random questions. She told me no; she never stumbled but was confident in her presentation. I feel humbled to have gone through this project with her. Kathy thrived with this project; you could see her pride in what she had done. It was well done.....beyond proud and excited about what occurred today!" (Alyssa, 2014)



CEL EMBEDDED REFLECTION PERIODS

Pre-experience, ongoing experience, and post-experience reflection periods to work through the cultural differences and connect with the integrated objectives.

“We definitely had plenty of reflection embedded in the process with our ‘Significant Moments’ assignments and class discussions.” (Rachel, 2015)

“I learned so much from my partner and the staff at the organization. I am so impressed with their work, creativity, and positive impact on the community. I confronted some of my stereotypes and was able to put into practice coming to a situation with an asset-model instead of a deficit-model. In light of these positive outcomes, I believe this project was a success.” (Ana, 2015)



WAS THIS A CMCE SERVICE LEARNING EXPERIENCE?

“We were a language and power class working with kids in an area of town that experiences language and power issues. The organization we worked with had a need and our class material aligned with a need for a service learning experience. On the other hand, **I don’t how effective the experience was when it came to learning about language, power, and society.** We were able to help the organization with their event and we learned about how it helped the community. Other than creating a relationship with kids from backgrounds we may not experience often, **I don’t know how the experience furthered our content knowledge.** Don’t get me wrong, the experience was rewarding on a personal level. It’s just that I’m stretching my brain to find ways planning the event furthered my knowledge on language and power.”

Jodi, 2014



“The only one of the five assumptions that I think was **questionable** was course content. We never discussed as a group how our service learning related to **language, culture, and power *working together***. I am still struggling to reflect on how our experiences related to those three concepts. While there was a lot of “power” involved in empowering the students, I’m not sure that we had a very striking example of using the kids’ language and culture to achieve that power. Nevertheless, I do believe that we achieved the other four assumptions and that brings us **much closer** to the CMCE model than other service-learning experiences in the past.”

Rachel, 2015



RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS

“Laura had the most power in our relationship. She had a clear vision of where to go in South O and how to do the poster. I listened to and learned from her but I do not think this was reciprocal. I don't care because I think she has learned from people like me in other contexts and I was there to learn about her culture. **I would not say the limited interaction of this service learning experience was enough to make me culturally effective. I do not think that we worked together to right injustices or correct inequalities.** I did not get an idea of how the culture views me. I do not know what the hispanic culture considers appropriate and inappropriate behavior. I am better able to be a cultural change agent in my own culture, in that I can say, from experience, South Omaha, at least in the daytime, is a safe, interesting place to be with hardworking, family centered people.”



MOVING FORWARD

- With the exception of three teachers, the rest of the “college student participants” identify the different assumptions of the CMCE model. However, there is still work to be done to make sure that the students see the class content connections with the service-learning experience.
- Include more course planning time with community partner.
- Have community participants students as part of the planning process for the service-learning experience.
- Look into the long-term results of this experience. Are the teachers implementing their own CMCE service-learning experiences? Have they being back in South Omaha? Have they gone back to the community organization?





“I believe I learned more from them than they did from me; which alludes back to the article about an asset based service-learning project. I completely think that by having this mentality my experience was significantly more positive and inspiring.” (Laura, 2014)



SELECTED REFERENCES

- Bartolomé, L. (1996). Beyond the methods fetish: Toward a humanizing pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 64, 173-194.
- Hess, D., Lanig, H., & Vaughan, W. (2007). Educating for equity and social justice: A conceptual model for cultural engagement. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 9(1), 32-39.
- Nieto, S. (2006). *Teaching as political work: Learning from courageous and caring teachers*. The Longfellow Lecture. Child Development Institute: Sarah Lawrence College.
- Nieto, S. (2013a). Language, literacy, and culture: Aha! Moments in personal and sociopolitical understanding. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education* [Online], 9(1), 8-20. Available at <http://jolle.coe.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Language-Literacy-Culture.pdf>.
- Nieto, S. (2013b). *Finding joy in teaching students of diverse backgrounds: Culturally responsive and socially just practices in U.S. classrooms*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Salazar, M., & Fránquiz, M. (2008). The transformation of Ms. Corazon: Creating humanizing spaces for Mexican immigrant students in secondary ESL classrooms. *Journal of Multicultural Perspectives*, 10(4), 185-191.
- Storti, C. (2001). *The art of crossing cultures*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.