Infusing Umoja, an Authentic and Culturally Engaging Service-Learning Model, into Multicultural Education

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This article describes the manner in which an authentic and culturally engaging service-learning model was infused into a multicultural education course for pre-service teachers. Service-learning programs integrated into education courses are often approached from a deficit perspective with pre-service teachers perceiving themselves as the privileged providing a service to diverse communities in need. Models of this nature tend to reinforce personal bias and stereotypes. The service-learning framework presented in this article is comprised of the following seven elements: (a) investment in community needs, (b) preparation and planning, (c) community engagement and empowerment, (d) curricula infusion of multicultural education, (e) bridging theory and practice, (f) recognition and celebration, and (g) reflection and evaluation. Infusing this model into a teacher education course engages pre-service teachers toward recognizing, appreciating, and understanding students who are racially and culturally different from themselves.

The cultural and linguistical diversity of American classrooms is increasing, which has dramatically affected education reform focused on strategies to effectively prepare pre-service teachers for diverse school environments. Such reform has suggested practicum opportunities, immersion experiences, mentoring by master teachers, quality supervision, course work in multicultural education, opportunities for teachers to interact with individuals from diverse cultures, and the establishment of partnerships both internal and external to school communities (Burant, 1999; Terrill & Mark, 2000; Wiest, 1998; Wiggins & Folio, 1999). However, additional work in this regard must be done (Milner, Flowers, Moore, Moore, & Flowers, 2003) due to the increasing diversity of public schools across the country.

The 2008 school enrollment figures were record setting with 43% of approximately 50 million students considered culturally and linguistically diverse as a result of U.S. immigration patterns and the growing diversity of the country (Sack-Min, 2008). However, the composition of the teaching force reflects disproportionate demographics. The National Center For Education Statistics reported over 80% of U.S. teachers as White, while students of color comprised over 40% of the concurrent student population (Scruggs, 2009). This imbalance between students and teachers continues to indicate a cultural mismatch within schools serving students attending kindergarten through Grade 12 (K-12; Graybill, 1997; Hill-Jackson, 2007). It is imperative that pre-service teachers enter classrooms with the competency skills, confidence, knowledge, and dispositions needed for cultural responsiveness to students of color.

Context

Various approaches have been attempted over the years to prepare pre-service teachers for culturally competency. One example was the inclusion of a service trip to a diverse elementary school within a large urban area for White pre-service teachers attending a multicultural education course within a rural region. Many returned to their college classroom with more stereotypes surrounding the community with its culturally and linguistically diverse residents. This outcome spurred additional research into theoretical approaches and models that integrated cultural competency and service-learning as an instructional practice to prepare White pre-service teachers for cultural competence. This article reports the value of a culturally engaging service-learning model that prepares, empowers, and engages White, middle-class pre-service teachers toward the development of cultural-competency skills.

Theoretical Foundation

Overview

Cultural competency within the realm of teacher education is the ability of pre-service teachers to successfully teach students who are culturally different from themselves (Diller & Moule, 2005). It involves pre-service teachers acquiring an awareness of, and sensitivity to, cultural diversity and demonstrating interpersonal, academic, and pedagogical skills that enable them to understand, appreciate, and accept such diversity while meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Hess, Lanig, & Vaughan, 2007; Meaney, Bohler, Kopf, Hernandez, & Scott, 2008; Ward & Ward, 2003). Service-learning is a form of experiential education that is instructional, structured, and interdisciplinary while supporting student knowledge, skills, and dispositions as they are helped to understand and accept their civic and social responsibilities (Burns, 1998). It is a teaching and

learning approach that links the academic curriculum to meaningful service opportunities while addressing the needs of the respective community (Ethridge, 2006; Jacoby, 1996; National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2011). This pedagogy applies theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom setting to practice within the field in a reflective manner.

As the United States continues to evidence a racial-demographic imbalance between teacher and student populations, service-learning is being implemented as a pedagogical approach to developing cultural competency skills in pre-service teachers (Meaney et al., 2008; Wehling, 2008). Many teacher preparation programs have infused service-learning into their curriculum (Barton, 2000; Culp, Chepyator-Thomson, & Hsu, 2009; Ethridge, 2006; Hess et al., 2007; Xin & Lal, 2005). Service is beneficial for future teachers because it engages them toward the application and active use of curricula methods and strategies used within the field of education (Jenkins & Sheehey, 2009; Rowls & Swick, 2000). It also provides mutually rewarding benefits for all stakeholders including (a) the community served, (b) the educators of teachers, and (c) pre-service teachers (Swick, 2001; Wehling, 2008).

When pre-service teachers are paired with K-12 students for tutoring opportunities, the teacher learners are able to apply instructional strategies acquired from the college classroom; the K-12 students receive academic support, tutoring, and remediation that enhances academic achievement; and the teacher educators are able to observe and mentor the pre-service teachers, provide quality feedback, and engage in action research while reflecting on instructional strategies in teacher education (Elwell, 2001; McHatton, Thomas, & Lehman, 2006; Pessate-Schubert, Thomas, & Lehman, 2006). Pre-service teachers engaging in service-learning within diverse communities are interacting with culturally and linguistically diverse students; increasing their awareness of cultural diversity; applying culturally relevant and responsive instructional approaches; addressing and reflecting upon personal biases and stereotypes; developing and understanding multiple perspectives; improving their self-confidence with teaching students racially and culturally different from themselves; questioning assumptions surrounding racism, classism, and sexism; and acknowledging issues of White privilege (Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 2000; Boyle-Baise & Langford, 2004; Karayan & Gathercoal, 2003; Meaney et al., 2008; Xin & Lal, 2005).

Deficit- and Asset-Based Approaches

Deficit-based approaches view the community, and those who live in it, as a place and a collection of residents "characterized by their problems, weaknesses,

and needs" (Glasson, 1997, p. 2). With regard to the deficit-based approach to service-learning, many scholars have asserted that service-learning opportunities tend to promote a "feel good" response and "missionary ideology," perpetuate stereotypes, reinforce assumptions surrounding inequalities, and foster paternalistic attitudes (Carter Andrews, 2009; Eby, 1998; Hess et al., 2007; Weah, Simmons, & Hall, 2000). According to Eby (1998), such opportunities do the following:

> [They reinforce] simplistic understandings of social problems and [ignore] resources and strengths already in communities. It is rewarding for a [pre-service teacher] student to share love, hugs, and mathematics with a student in a tutoring program, but this individualization of social issues ignores structural components and causes. Often students who do service-learning enter communities from outside. This reinforces the idea that communities themselves are deficient and need outside resources to work at their problems. (p. 3-4)

Service-learning opportunities of this nature are primarily structured from a deficit perspective, do not involve all participants on an equal basis, and are from the perspectives of the teacher educator or pre-service teacher, which reinforce their privileged roles of providing service to the less privileged (Hess et al., 2007; Karayan & Gathercoal, 2003).

Asset-based approaches consider the community as having strengths and empower residents to make their own decisions. An asset-based approach to service-learning is also an authentic, critical model applied within diverse communities. It is designed to help pre-service teachers develop cultural competency and focuses on all participants to ensure they have equal, active, and legitimate voices and representation in the service-learning process. Hess et al. (2007) shifted the paradigm from the service-learning deficit approach, due to a lack of models integrating service-learning and cultural competency from an asset-based perspective. They referred to the approach as the conceptual model for cultural engagement. The method was drawn from literature on service-learning, asset-based community building, and cultural competency. Hess et al. (2007) espoused the importance of adopting a service-learning model that "develops long-term interactive relationships between faculty, students, and communities from an asset-based perspective [that] acknowledges that each individual comes from a culture that has a significant number of assets and/or strengths" (p. 34). This model actively engages all participants in learning as they mutually benefit from each other.

Service-Learning Framework

The authentic and culturally engaging (ACE) service-learning framework described in this article was developed by integrating preparation, action, reflection, and evaluation—the conceptual model for cultural engagement—and the K-12 service-learning standards for quality practice (Burns, 1998; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2005; Hess et al., 2007; Learn and Service Indiana, n.d.; National Youth Leadership Council, 2008; Vickers, Harris, & McCarthy, 2004). The framework is deeply rooted in multicultural, cross-cultural, culturally engaging, and critical service-learning pedagogy (Boyle-Baise, 2002; Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Mitchell, 2007; Rosenberger, 2000; Rosner-Salazar, 2003; Warren, 2007). Designed to help pre-service teachers develop, improve, or enhance their cultural competency skills, the ACE service-learning framework is comprised of the following seven elements: (a) investing in community needs, (b) planning and preparation, (c) community engagement and empowerment (i.e., collaboration, mutual reciprocity, and self and collective empowerment), (d) curricula infusion of multicultural education (i.e., self-awareness, equality, cultural competency, and social justice), (e) bridging theory and practice (i.e., advocacy and critical thinking), (f) recognition and celebration (i.e., guided reflection and critical thinking), and (g) reflection and evaluation.

Investment in Community Needs

Focus. Service-learning must address a need from the perspectives of the community (Jacoby, 1996). It is critical for this element of the model to be applied in any service-learning opportunity. This approach maximizes both the impact of change as the community is empowered and the potential for sustainability of the service program. Service-learning opportunities have fostered paternalistic attitudes with some teacher educators and pre-service teachers assuming the roles of the privileged and naming the problems for the less privileged (Rosenberger, 2000).

Children of color are disproportionately represented throughout the U.S. foster-care system. They are the least likely to be returned to their families or adopted. Black/African-American children are four times more likely than White/European Caucasian children to be assigned to state custody or foster care (National Fostercare Coalition, n.d.). As early as 1939, White families were adopting African-American children amidst valid objections (Vonk & Massatti, 2008). Known as transracial adoption, this was created to address the overrepresentation of Black children within the foster-care system. Opponents of such adoption have asserted that the children are at risk for losing their racial, cultural, physical, and emotional identities (McManus, 2008).

Application. During 2005, White parents of transracial adoptions expressed concern over issues affecting families within the community. Many questioned the possibility of African American/Black children, especially those living within predominantly White midwestern communities, experiencing identity-development conflicts, poor racial identities, and limited interaction with other African-American children. A call was dispersed throughout the community requesting participation in addressing this community need.

Preparation and Planning

Focus. Preparation and planning requires a two-pronged approach (i.e., within both the community and classroom) to developing a service-learning project based upon community feedback. Classroom preparation is ongoing through the duration of the service, especially as planning ensues before, during, and after the service is officially completed.

Application. Planning and preparation begin when the community at large has convened, which involves social workers from adoptive services, White parents raising Black children, Black community residents, and professionals working within the field of multicultural education. Such group deliberation has resulted in culturally relevant and interactive enrichment activities that depict positive images of Blackness within American society. Programs exist that celebrate the rich and diverse traditions of Black identities and cultures. They can be fun, interactive, nurturing, celebratory, and positive for all participants.

Community Engagement and Empowerment

Focus. Community engagement and empowerment is a critical element that can impact the success of the entire process of a service-learning project. It is based upon the following assumptions: collaboration, mutual reciprocity, self and collective empowerment, and partnership. It is the "glue" that connects all components of the process. An authentic service-learning program must involve all partners including young adults, school personnel, community members, families, and community organizations. All stakeholders collaborate as equal partners with a shared vision, set of objectives, and purpose, as well as the shared intent of both contributing to, and benefitting from, the service (Bosma et al., 2010; National Youth Leadership Council, 2008). This element of the framework intersects with all other aspects because engagement is ongoing from the planning through the reflection stages.

Application. During 2006, the Umoja was developed for White parents of adopted Black children. The genesis of this group emerged from community interaction involving parents with limited knowledge in culturally relevant, Black heritage child-rearing practices and the Black history, tradition, and values they needed to support their children. Group meetings were held in a secluded and serene retreat setting that was "family friendly," free of major distractions such as water parks or malls, and that empowered all participants to engage in dialogue and reflect upon their mutual experiences. The program was named Umoja because this is the first principle of the African-American Kwanzaa tradition that celebrates community, culture, and family. In the African Swahili language, the name means unity, which reflects the partnership and collaboration between all involved partners. The word is rooted in the popular African proverb, "it takes a village to raise a child," which denotes the relationship and collaborative nature among the participants (i.e., Black/African-American children, the White European/Caucasian parents and families, community members, pre-service teachers, and faculty of the institution of higher education [IHE]).

Application of the ACE service-learning model requires all participants to "work cooperatively, build reciprocal relationships, listen, and learn from each other" (Hess et al., 2007, p. 34). All stakeholders benefit from each other with the dialectical nature of this relationship. The African-American children have the opportunity to engage in culturally authentic and relevant activities that depict Blacks in positive roles. They are exposed to peers with similar physical characteristics, and their knowledge of Black history is enhanced. The adult White parents have the entire weekend with no distractions to experience African-American cultures, history, values, and child-rearing practices with primarily Black/African-American national, state, and community experts. Participants from the community at large are primarily African-American presenters, community volunteers, and social workers who are available for resources as well as to present and observe during the weekend. The IHE faculty member conducts research with scholars and presenters knowledgeable in Black heritage and adoption, transforms the college course syllabus to align its objectives with those of Umoja, ensures that cultural competency is encouraged, encourages mentors, and supervises pre-service teachers.

Curricula Infusion of Multicultural Education

Focus. The multicultural-education curricula approach is infused into service-learning to help pre-service teachers acquire the skills needed for cultural competence. It is a teaching and learning approach that "affirms cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies" (Bennett, 2003, p. 14) and helps students gain a full understanding of people's culturally different from themselves. Pre-service teachers are empowered to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to function effectively within an increasingly diverse society (Banks, 2002; Gay, 1994, 2000; Nieto, 2000).

Many leading scholars, such as James Banks, Christine Bennett, Geneva Gay, Christine Sleeter, and Carl Grant (as cited in Gay, 1994) have developed various multicultural education approaches. They are infused into the pedagogy that supports the ACE service-learning framework; however, the Bennett (2003) and Grant and Sleeter (2007) approaches are primary to this framework and to helping pre-service teachers develop the needed cultural competency skills. Bennett (2003) suggested four dimensions of equal significance; however, multicultural competence was emphasized. Such competence equates to teachers becoming comfortable with, and learning how to interact with, students who are racially different from themselves. This dimension is emphasized in the ACE service-learning framework because it empowers pre-service teachers to enter the field successfully instructing culturally diverse students (Diller & Moule, 2005). The framework empowers pre-service teachers to recognize, appreciate, and understand the true meaning of cultural sensitivity and competence. They learn to create developmentally appropriate teaching methods and materials that are sensitive and relevant to a culturally and linguistically diverse student population. They are ultimately able to provide learning experiences that affirm all learners and are able to detect and review biases within curricular material.

Application. The ACE service-learning framework is integrated into a multicultural education course within a liberal-arts institution and is designed for early childhood to middle childhood (i.e., from birth to 10 years of age) teacher certification. The course is delivered in 2-hour slots, three times per week, for 10 weeks. Umoja is a required service-learning component and is introduced during approximately the ninth week of the semester. Textbooks are recommended to provide pre-service teachers with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be culturally competent and multiculturally aware (Diller & Moule, 2005; Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Howard, 2006; Stalvey, 1970). Application of the ACE service-learning framework is presented within three different core areas addressed within the literature.

The first core area within related literature that has addressed the ACE service-learning framework is focused on the characteristics suggested by Garmon (2004) and Valentin (2006) for cultural competency in pre-service teachers. These researchers advanced that teacher learners must be self-aware and reflective (as cited in Xin & Gang, 2009), acknowledging the impact

of their own racial and cultural identities on themselves, others, and society. It is impossible for pre-service teachers "to appreciate the impact of culture on the lives of others, particularly students, if one is out of touch with his or her own cultural background" (Diller & Moule, 2005, p. 15).

The question, "Who am I?" is also posed to future teachers to give them the opportunity to reflect upon and study their own racial backgrounds (DomNwachukwu, 2010) and how they may influence the identities they bring into the classroom. The Helms White-identity-development model (as cited in Tatum, 1997), the Cross Black-identity racial-development theory (as cited in Howard, 2006), and the McIntosh (1988) article on White privilege are also useful references. The "Who am I?" question, as well as its relationship to White identity development and White privilege, is analyzed by Stalvey (1970). All of these references support White pre-service teachers, especially as they reflect upon their social positionality and the status of Whiteness within the United States. This reflective process is critical because it contextualizes the rationale for developing cultural competency.

The second core area within which existing literature has addressed application of the ACE service-learning framework is the knowledge of pre-service teachers as it relates to the cultural backgrounds of their students. This is a critical factor in the theoretical foundation of multicultural education, culturally relevant pedagogy, and antiracist education (Banks, 2002; Diller & Moule, 2005; Gay, 2000; Grant & Sleeter, 2007). Teacher learners must be aware that cultural differences exist and acknowledge their impact on the learning process. They must understand that, when they come from cultural backgrounds that differ from those of their students, as argued by Fox, "there is a strong likelihood that sooner or later they will mis-communicate [*sic*] by misinterpreting or misjudging the behavior of others" (as cited in Diller & Moule, 2005, p. 16). Pre-service teachers conduct research on the issues, strategies, assumptions, and value of working with culturally and linguistically diverse students. They explore various cultural learning styles and analyze children's books for sexism and racism (Council of Interracial Books for Children, 1974; Derman-Sparks & The A.B.C. Task Force, 1989; Diller & Moule, 2005). Once knowledge is garnered surrounding students who are culturally different from themselves, pre-service teachers are able to develop learning goals that reflect the cultural values of their students.

The third core area within which existing literature has addressed application of the ACE service-learning framework is multicultural education, which includes culturally relevant teaching and pedagogy curricula approaches (Gay, 2000; Grant & Sleeter, 2007;

Howard, 2006). As required for cultural competency, this involves acquiring and demonstrating pedagogical skills that enable future teachers to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Hess et al., 2007; Meaney et al., 2008; Ward & Ward, 2003). These approaches are especially important because they teach pre-service teachers theoretical and practical strategies they can apply to infuse multicultural education into their classroom instruction. McAllister and Irvine (2000) asserted that process frameworks, such as the Helms identity model (as cited in Tatum, 1997) and, in this context, the multicultural education approaches, influence student behavior and attitude. This, in turn, affects their participation in field opportunities, provides pedagogical strategies relevant and applicable by students, and creates a balance in their cross-cultural growth. Review and research of the five multicultural teaching approaches (Grant & Sleeter, 2007) is useful for pre-service educators, as is their participation in a series of "hands-on" activities within the classroom to develop actual lesson plans modeled after these approaches. Such exposure provides a foundation and frame of reference to begin planning for the service-learning project because it "extends the service-learning philosophy to the case of teaching about race, culture, and class" (Sperling, 2007, p. 309).

Pre-service teachers are currently expected to transfer the knowledge, skills, and dispositions acquired from their course work to the field by participating in service-learning projects such as Umoja. Students enrolled in diversity-related courses are less likely to form prejudicial judgments of ethnic groups other than their own (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005). They typically become empathetic, culturally aware, and sensitive to infusing culturally relevant approaches into their teaching philosophy.

Bridging Theory and Practice

Focus. Umoja, as an academic service-learning opportunity, is characterized by the following: (a) Secluded Site engages pre-service teachers in a controlled cross-cultural setting to teach culturally relevant activities useful with African-American/Black K-12 students, (b) One-One Contact enhances the comfort level of pre-service teachers with close interaction with African-American/Black students, (c) Multicultural Education Teaching Confidence improves self-confidence with teaching culturally and racially diverse students, and (d) Multicultural Experiential Learning enables pre-service teachers to take advantage of opportunities to apply theoretical applications to field practice. Pre-service teachers acquire knowledge, skills, and dispositions that render them ready to integrate theory with practice by developing the

instructional activities needed for their service-learning project. For example, partners from Umoja (i.e., the IHE faculty and pre-service teachers) provide the student participants and planning can begin for developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant activities. The teacher educator assumes a secondary role within the classroom and empowers the pre-service teachers with the opportunity to actively engage in group discussion surrounding the service-learning goals, expectations, and anticipated outcomes. Table 1 outlines the various activities prior to the weekend program.

Application. Pre-service teachers travel approximately two hours to the service-learning location on the Friday preceding the Umoja weekend. They are responsible for all student activities beginning with creative, interactive family activities to acquaint the students with themselves.

Recognition and Celebration

Focus. The Learn and Service Indiana (n.d.) organization has asserted that the element known as the "Big Wow" (Kaye, 2010) does not need to be placed at the end of the program. It can be an ongoing component, allowing pre-service teachers to demonstrate, share, celebrate, and be acknowledged for their growth from the service-learning project (Learn and Service Indiana, n.d.).

Application. Pre-service teachers plan a culminating event for the conclusion of the Umoja weekend that presents Kwanzaa, an African-American celebration. Kwanzaa is celebrated from December 26th to January 1st; however, great importance lies in celebrating all the principles of Kwanzaa on a daily basis. Consequently, it is celebrated at Umoja. The Kwanzaa program highlights the knowledge (e.g., in Black heritage, traditions, and values) and skills acquired by the students from the service-learning. The pre-service teachers simulate an actual Kwanzaa ceremony, engaging the Umoja students and their parents. The children participate in this ceremony through Black-heritage skits, poems, readings, and songs learned from their pre-service teachers during the weekend. The adults are typically observed with tears of joy and exhibiting a sense of pride at seeing their children demonstrate increased confidence surrounding their Blackness. The Umoja organizers extend tokens of appreciation to the pre-service teachers including Umoja tee shirts and culturally appropriate Black-heritage books for use in their future classrooms.

Reflection and Evaluation

Focus. In the ACE service-learning framework, reflection is using "creative and critical thinking skills to help prepare for, succeed in, and learn from the service experience, and to examine the larger picture and context in which the service occurs" (Toole & Toole, 1995, p. 100-101). It is woven into all aspects of the framework and occurs before, during, and after the service. It is systemic, structured, and occurs randomly to engage all participants. Reflection manifests in various forms—(a) informal and formal; (b) face-to-face, individual, and group meetings; (c) online among all participants; and (d) in formal evaluations by all participants. The students evaluate the service-learning program and course, the community members evaluate the project, and the pre-service teachers complete a portfolio assignment. This process empowers the pre-service teachers to brainstorm, generate, discuss, and apply ideas, as well as improve future plans (Learn and Service Indiana, n.d.).

Application. The pre-service teachers have numerous opportunities to engage in consistent reflection and evaluation, especially as it relates to their cultural competency abilities. A major reflection opportunity is during class time while preparing and debriefing for the Umoja project. Pre-service teachers construct a venn diagram to reflect upon the intersections between academic learning and service-learning (Institute for Civic and Community Engagement, n.d.). This enables them to analyze the connection between the objectives and outcomes of the project and to determine the impact of their teaching as future educators. They also participate in pre and post online assessments to determine what they learned, and written reflections provide feedback to the institution on teacher-student collaboration and inform the teacher educator about the role of the pre-service teachers, their participation, and how they applied course content in the field.

Discussion

The ACE service-learning framework, as an instructional and learning approach woven into a multicultural education course, is rewarding and of extreme value to the IHE faculty, pre-service teachers, students, and community at large. The course's focus of multiculturalism and cultural competency was initially sensitive and controversial for some pre-service teachers before introduction of the ACE service-learning framework. The dynamics of course participation dramatically changed after infusion of the ACE framework, which is in its fifth year of existence. This framework empowered pre-service teachers to successfully recognize, understand, and teach students who are racially and culturally different from themselves (Diller & Moule, 2005). Many students left the experience with higher levels of cultural competency. The opportunities to prepare and plan by

Table 1
Service-Learning Project Activities

Task	Application/Implementation	Outcomes
Pre-service teachers assign various roles	The recorder documents the meeting minutes and distributes them via the course list serv. Resources/teaching materials are purchased for Umoja by an individual with excellent listening, writing, and organizational skills. The creative designer develops all computer-generated handouts. The lead facilitator advances group discussion and often makes the hard decisions and performs other roles ranging from seeking in-kind donation, monetary funding, and purchasing teaching materials.	
Select culturally relevant and instructional unit theme. Select the various age-groups to teach.	Pre-service teachers "brainstorm" themes that are culturally relevant and enriching for the Umoja students. Each pre-service teacher suggests three or four themes and one is selected through a process of elimination.	2010 Theme: It is Good That I Exist; 2009 Theme: Visiting Countries on the African Continent; 2008 Theme: Black Heritage Games; 2007 Theme: Who Am I? An average of three pre-service teachers per 20 students for the various age-groups.
Develop lessons using the single-group-studies approach (Grant & Sleeter, 2007).	This is an instructional unit for learning inside and outside the classroom and is comprehensive, containing several sequential lessons inclusive of the concepts to be taught, collaborative planning with students, exciting introductory activity, DVDs, visual materials, cooperative student activities, and a culminating event that summarizes student learning (Davidman & Davidman, 2001).	This is culture specific and integrates the history, perspectives, culture, current social agenda, and issues of particular concern to Blacks/African Americans.
Design the physical layout of the Umoja classroom.	Pre-service teachers are provided with large empty meeting spaces to apply the knowledge acquired from their college classroom to create an environment that is culturally relevant to the students. Grant & Sleeter (2007) asserted that a room should radiate diversity in classroom displays.	Posters depicting Blacks in positive and active roles and in relationship to various racial groups.
Set up at the Umoja service-learning site.	Group meeting, touring the facilities, and dividing and setting up the rooms for various age-groups.	Four different rooms for various age-groups. Rooms are decorated with posters of African-American sheroes and heroes balanced between those living and dead. Centers are arranged with books and artifacts depicting positive images of African Americans.
Teach activities Saturday and Sunday	Engage children in Black-heritage activities (e.g., reading, arts, science activities).	Support children in sharing activities learned with parents and other family members.

creating and teaching multicultural activities, engage themselves and the community by collaborating on an equal level, bridging theory and practice, and working one-one with students in a secluded—and nurturing—setting with faculty mentorship, empowered the pre-service teachers to be both comfortable with students and confident about teaching cross-culturally. Reoccurring themes that emerged from the evaluations revealed pre-service teachers had acquired the pedagogical skills enabling them to appreciate and be sensitive to students of color. Many indicated "gain[ing] comfort and knowledge about working with African American students." They had acquired an awareness of, and sensitivity to, cultural diversity.

Positive Outcomes

Pre-service teachers responded to pre and post evaluation questions relating to ACE framework. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess their knowledge and dispositions before and after the service-learning experience (August/November). The following measures were taken into account: the ACE elements, the Umoja academic service-learning program objectives, and the evaluations. In fact, the ACE model is a multidimensional framework that intersects with all the Umoja objectives. For example, Community Engagement and Empowerment and Reflection and Evaluation are linked to providing a Secluded Site. Many pre-service teachers indicated that it "really brought the group together." They report that the setting was a "very open environment where everyone is equal" and was "a lot of fun and rewarding." The results show there is support for the ACE framework when evaluating Umoja.

A key goal of using this framework is to empower pre-service teachers to be culturally competent, which involves pre-service teachers having the ability to successfully teach students who are culturally different from themselves (Diller & Moule, 2005). Through one-to-one contacts with the African American students, this critical piece enhanced pre-service teachers' ability to be comfortable in their interaction with students. In fact, evidence showed many ties to Preparation and Planning (e.g., creating developmental appropriate multicultural lessons), Community Engagement and Empowerment (e.g., contact with children, parents, and African American scholars), Recognition and Celebration (e.g., presenting and participating in Kwanzaa). One pre-service teacher commented, "I have greater confidence." The opportunity for one-on-one contact with African-American children within a controlled social setting helped to reduce any existing prejudice and/or fear surrounding teaching young Black students. It empowered the pre-service teachers to affirm, appreciate, and respect cultural pluralism.

Another outcome that emerged from the evaluations is Multicultural Education Teaching Confidence, a central piece that intersects with most of the ACE elements, especially the Infusion of Multicultural Education (preparing, planning, and creating developmentally appropriate culturally relevant lessons), Bridging Theory and Practice (teaching lessons, one-to-one interactions with African American/Black students, knowledge base of preferred cultural learning styles, and differentiating instruction). A student noted, it was "the highlight of my semester," and "it was great to be able to use what we have learned [in class] with children."

Finally, Multicultural Experiential Learning was a feature that dominated all of the pre-service teachers' responses, specifically because it relates to service-learning, a pedagogical approach that enables them to link the knowledge gained in the college classroom to the field. This key outcome is woven into the entire framework, especially Bridging Theory and Practice (knowledge and skills in multicultural education, using culturally appropriate terminology, knowledge of preferred learning styles of African American students, knowing how to initiate authentic conversations with Black students, differentiating instruction, and actively engaging student interest) and Recognition and Celebration (teaching and presenting Kwanzaa). A student noted,

> I was able plan and implement multicultural lesson plans. . . . I was able to take pride and ownership over everything that I had planned, organized for, and then practiced with the group of students. I also took pride when the students demonstrated things they have learned.

These outcomes reveal that Umoja is professionally and personally fulfilling for pre-service teachers.

Recommendations

In summary, the ACE service-learning framework has proven to be an effective method for empowering pre-service teachers toward cultural competence.

Five years into the application of this model, with over 50 different pre-service teachers, opportunities for growth continue. Consistent, formal performance evaluations of culturally relevant teaching and appropriate lesson creation would be ideal; however, it is challenging to document concurrent, detailed evaluations of various pre-service teachers. Additional IHE faculty are needed to effectively observe pre-service teachers within the classroom. Preferably, it will be beneficial for pre-service teachers to have multiple one-one devoted supervision time with the faculty while teaching the various multicultural

activities so they can be coached and mentored as they develop and enhance their multicultural teaching confidence. This provides constructive feedback that shows the developmental nature of multicultural teaching confidence and shows the level of cultural competency skills. With five years of model application, a longitudinal study could be conducted to evaluate if the pre-service teachers are able to transfer their cultural-competency skills into in-service teaching.

Placed at the center of a secluded learning community, these future teachers gain, enhance, and apply new knowledge and skills and see the immediate outcomes of pride and joy in all participants. Its intensity in a secluded area away from campus could sometimes be considered a scheduling challenge as they are enrolled in other college courses while in the midst of planning an academic service-learning project. The model holds great potential for a summer multicultural education course coupled with a three- to five-week summer residential program for pre-service teachers and Umoja K-12 students. The ACE service-learning framework is applied once per year to this course, although it is taught twice each year.

The ACE service-learning framework has empowered pre-service teachers in the development of cultural competency. It emphasizes the integration of multicultural education, independent and collective empowerment, self-awareness, community, collaboration, mutual reciprocity, guided reflection, critical thinking, equality, and social justice (Boyle-Baise, 2002; Rosner-Salazar, 2003). The opportunity it presents for pre-service teachers has promoted cultural awareness, sensitivity, and appreciation rather than stereotypes. It has empowered future teachers to critically reflect upon their role as culturally competent educators with the intent of infusing multicultural-education approaches in their future classrooms.

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