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**Community Psychology Values-Driven Pedagogy:
The Foundation for Empowering Educational Settings**

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Community Psychology Values-Driven Pedagogy: The Foundation for Empowering Educational Settings

Abstract

This paper discusses the role of community psychology values-driven pedagogy as the foundation for the enactment of an empowering educational setting for community psychology graduate students. Using the Applied Community Psychology Specialization at Antioch University Los Angeles as a model, curricular and extracurricular program elements that foster student well-being are identified. A model of an empowering educational setting is presented. Explored are intrapersonal, interactional, behavioral, and longitudinal empowerment as they relate to student and faculty roles. Student empowerment outcomes and indicators of student learning are highlighted with case examples.

The field of community psychology has articulated a series of holistic values intended to support personal, relational, and collective well-being in the programs, practices, and policies we develop in our work with communities (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). These values in turn create the conditions for the enactment of empowered settings. While it can be argued that we strive to uphold these values in our community work and research, these values are often in direct conflict with the policies and practices employed by colleges and universities educating future community psychologists. This paper explores the relationship between community psychology values-driven pedagogy and empowering educational settings which support students in achieving their full potential as practitioners of community psychology. The Applied Community Psychology Specialization at Antioch University Los Angeles will serve as a model.

University and Program Context of the ACP Specialization

Antioch University has a long-standing history of social justice centered education and pedagogy. Since the inception of Antioch College in 1852, the College and subsequently, the University serve as pioneers in values-driven education – predicated on the “belief that scholarship and life experience are strengthened when linked, that diversity in all its manifestations is a fundamental component of excellence in education, and that authentic social and community engagement are vital for those who strive to win victories for humanity” (Antioch College, 2010). These values serve as the foundation for the teaching philosophy of Antioch University as whole, including the Los Angeles campus, established in 1972.

The Applied Community Psychology Specialization

The Applied Community Psychology Specialization (ACP) is a 17-unit, optional course of study within the M.A. Psychology (MAP) Program at Antioch University Los Angeles (AULA). The MAP Program offers two degrees: the M.A. in Clinical Psychology (MACP) which prepares students eligibility for licensure as Marriage and Family Therapists in the State of California, and the M.A. Individualized Concentration (MPIC), providing psychology education for students not interested in pursuing clinical licensure at the Master’s level. ACP provides students in both degree programs with opportunities to develop theoretical and practical skills for working in community settings. The greater Los Angeles area, arguably one of the most culturally and socially diverse in the world, offers a unique training ground for students to hone their skills in community work with a vast range of populations.

The ACP curriculum consists of a gateway course (*Community Psychology: Theories and Methods*), four core courses (*Community Consultation and Collaboration, Program Development and Evaluation, Prevention and Promotion, and Psychoeducational Groups and In-Service Training Development*), and a *Field Study in Applied Community Psychology*. Students also have an opportunity to take elective workshops on a wide range of topics (e.g., grant writing, empowerment in community practice, asset-based community development). Each of the four ACP core courses includes three common course processes: course reading; working directly with representatives from community agencies to address agency (versus exclusively student) identified issues; and supervision both in and out of the classroom. For each core course students prepare oral presentations for the class and host agency. In the *Community Consultation and Collaboration, Program Development and Evaluation, and Prevention and Promotion* courses, students work collaboratively in

small groups (two to four students) and prepare written technical reports for their host agencies. In the *Psychoeducational Groups and In-Service Training Development* course students work independently with a host agency to design a psychoeducational program for clients served by the agency or an in-service for agency staff. In addition, students prepare resource materials to accompany their programs and an informational booklet summarizing program content. Psychoeducational groups and in-service trainings are typically delivered to the agency in the subsequent term through ACP's community Partnership Speakers Bureau (CPSB) and are evaluated by program participants, agency directors, and ACP faculty. The informational booklets prepared by students are published through the CPSB and made available free of charge through the AULA website along with the ACP LibGuide (described in Appendix).

Students in ACP are primarily female (75.7%) adult learners (mean age = 38.7) who work in addition to attending school (51.4% full-time, 41.2% part-time) (Taylor & Sarkisian, 2010). Over 60% of ACP students self-identify as belonging to an ethnic minority group, with the majority identifying as African-American or Black (38%). The majority of ACP students enter the specialization with prior community experience (extensive volunteer services and/or work with grassroots organizations or nonprofits). The students express a desire to take the knowledge they acquire in the specialization back into the communities where they live and work. While most students hold undergraduate degrees in the social sciences or the humanities, few have had exposure to the core skill sets presented to them in ACP.

Values Driven Pedagogy and Praxis

The pedagogical philosophy of ACP is strongly rooted in the tradition of liberation pedagogy as articulated by Friere and the tenets of democratic education proposed by Dewey. Freire (1970) argued that students could not be fully engaged in their own learning unless education was linked to praxis. ACP employs Friere's "problem-posing" methodology. Students in each of the core ACP courses are presented with real world "problems" that are identified by community agencies and organizations and challenged to use the theories and methods they learn in the course to address the problem, rather than to merely engage in a theoretical exploration of the issues. As a result, their engagement in the course material is far more meaningful:

- as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world with the
- world, [students] will feel increasingly challenged and obliged to respond to that
- challenge. . . Their response to the challenge evokes new challenges, followed by new
- understandings; and gradually the students come to regard themselves as committed. (Freire, 1970, p. 81).

This commitment to engagement with the community as part of the ACP pedagogical model is at the core of Dewey's (1997) notion of democratic education, in which the process of education should prepare students for democratic citizenship and community engagement.

While the pedagogical model employed in ACP courses results in commitment and community engagement of our students, we turn to community psychology values to enhance the personal, relational and collective well-being of our students. If the underlying goal of a community psychology program is to train students who will embrace the values of the discipline and apply them in their work, it is essential they experience those values as part of their education. Unfortunately, what transpires in the classroom and in the process of completing class assignments linked to the community can only partially achieve this goal. Extracurricular program components become vital to fully achieving student well-being.

We developed and implemented a Professional Development Model (see Appendix) consisting of a series of activities complementing the course work within the specialization. Each element provides students with opportunities to develop their professional skills in community psychology practice beyond what is taught in the classroom. At the foundation of this model are the professional relationships developed between students and specialization faculty, and among students, alumni (ambassadors), and community agencies. Each component of the ACP Professional Development Model is designed to enhance student well-being. Based on the work of Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010), Table 1 identifies how personal, relational and collective well-being are defined and the program activities addressing each area. Enactment of these values through pedagogy, curricular content, and extracurricular opportunities create the conditions necessary to foster student empowerment, growth and development.

Table 1. *Applied Community Psychology Specialization Values for Student Well-Being* (Adapted from: Nelson & Prilleltensky (2010), p. 61)

Domains	Personal Well-being			Relational Well-being		Collective Well-being	
Values	Self-determination	Caring and Compassion	Health	Respect for diversity	Participation and collaboration	Support for community structures	Social justice and accountability
Objective	Creation of opportunities to pursue academic and professional goals without excessive frustration	Expression of care and concern for the well-being of students	Promotion student academic and professional well-being; and promotion of student self-care	Promotion of respect and appreciation for diverse social identities and for student's ability to define themselves personally and professionally	Promotion of fair processes whereby students can have meaningful input into decisions affecting their academic and professional development	Promotion of program structures and faculty advocacy that facilitate student pursuit of personal, and professional, and community goals	Promotion of fair and equitable allocation academic, professional and community opportunities for students
Needs Addressed	Mastery, control, self-efficacy, voice, choice, skills, growth and autonomy	Attention, empathy, acceptance, positive regard	Academic, professional, emotional, and physical well-being	Identity, dignity, self-respect, self-esteem, acceptance	Participation, involvement and mutual responsibility	Sense of community, cohesion, formal support	Access to vital academic and professional development services
Program Activities (see Appendix for full descriptions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Student Conference • Faculty mentoring and academic advising • Professional Development Series • Community, Social Justice, and Diversity Research Group • ACP Pecha-Kucha Presentation 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core course and field study projects • Student and ambassador mentoring • ACP professional portfolio 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core course and field study projects • Community Partnership Speakers Bureau • Info to Know 	

Student-Empowerment Pedagogy and Mentoring in the ACP Specialization

The development of our student-empowerment pedagogy and mentoring students in ACP is rooted in literature on psychological empowerment theory (Zimmerman, 2000; Kieffer, 1984) and empowering community settings (Maton, 2008; Maton & Salem, 1995). Additionally, our recent efforts in conducting a seven-year program review (Taylor & Sarkisian, 2010) has greatly informed our understanding of the reflective practice of teaching and transparency as it

relates to connections between program goals, activities and student learning outcomes.

ACP Student Empowerment

In teaching culturally diverse students with an array of professional talents and academic abilities, we are often challenged with balancing course structure and flexibility. For this reason, we developed a definition of *ACP Student Empowerment* based on Maton's (2008) work which broadly describes the process and outcome aspects of empowerment:

- A participatory, developmental, group-based process through which students achieve
- their academic goals, advance their professional development in the practice of applied
- community psychology, and, acquire valued educational and professional resources to
- promote individual, organizational and community well-being.

Teaching and Mentoring

At the program level, Maton & Salom's (1995) work on organizational characteristics of empowering community settings has influenced how we conceptualize our role in developing meaningful opportunities for students to develop academically, professionally, and personally. Figure 1 presents a model illustrating how community psychology values-driven pedagogy promotes the development of an empowering educational setting within the ACP Specialization. Community Psychology values serve as the foundation for the enactment of problem-solving pedagogy that engages students: to draw inspiration from the work their courses require them to do in the community; to engage in curricular processes that allow students to identify their own strengths and talents, as well as those of their peers; to foster collaborative relationships where these talents are freely shared; and ultimately, to develop a commitment to using this process in their collaborative work in community settings. This pedagogical model creates conditions which drive the need for holistic program components supporting student well-being and professional growth, both inside and outside of the classroom. Many elements of the ACP Professional Development Model serve to enhance student well-being. In turn, holistic program components drive the development of student empowerment and foster opportunities for collaboration both within the program (with faculty and students) as well as in the community with organizations and agencies. Taken together, each of these components lead to the enactment of community psychology values in students' work and

build a sense of community within ACP and our community partners, which in turn, drive the program faculty and students to critically reflect on the continued refinement of the process.

In our work with students, Zimmerman's (2000) three dimensional model of psychological empowerment (PE) theory informs our teaching and mentoring. Additionally, the role of mentors and supportive peer relationships thought to be critical to the development of participatory competence observed in Kieffer's (1984) research are also roles we work to develop with students. Finally, the longitudinal dynamic has been a key ingredient in the attainment of PE and the development of participatory competence in the literature (Kieffer, 1984; Zimmerman, 2000) and in our work with students. While students complete the ACP specialization in one to two years, the longitudinal dynamic is relevant, in that students continue their focus on ACP skill development across settings (i.e., course & field), issues, and levels of analysis.

Table 2 summarizes our student empowerment pedagogy to teaching and mentoring in the ACP specialization. The four dimensions of ACP student empowerment – intrapersonal, interactional, behavioral, and longitudinal – are presented by student roles, faculty roles, student empowerment outcomes and indicators of student learning. Consistent with Kieffer (1984) and Zimmerman (2000), we conceptualize student empowerment as context-specific. Thus, we have defined student empowerment and articulated pedagogical approaches within the programmatic context of the ACP specialization. Structurally, each of the four ACP core courses has been developed to provide an opportunity role structure (Maton & Salem, 1995) for students to engage in multiple learning domains simultaneously (i.e., skills-based curriculum in ACP core courses, multi-level field work, and collaboration) to better prepare them for their work in the community after graduation.

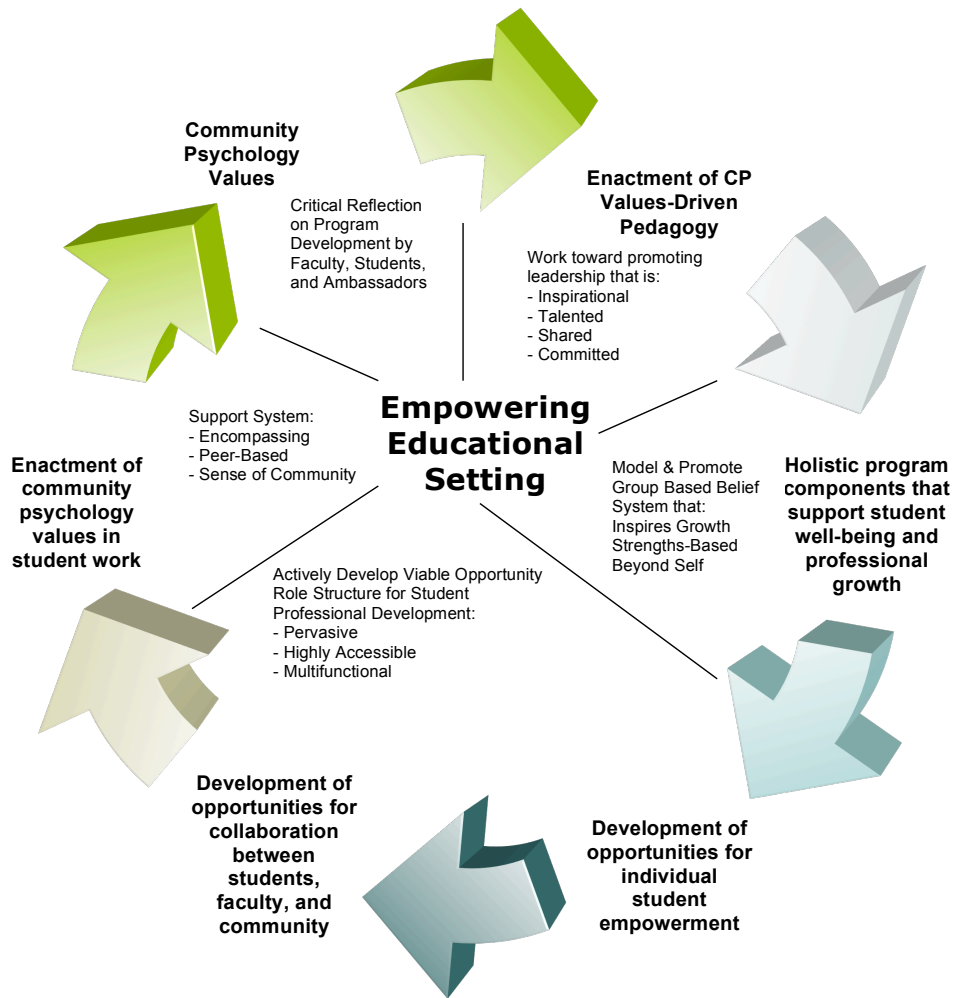


Figure 1: Community Psychology Values-Driven Pedagogy to Promote an Empowering Educational Setting. (Adapted from: Maton & Salem, 1995)

Table 2. *Student Empowerment Pedagogy in the Applied Community Psychology Specialization* (Adapted from: Kieffer (1984) and Zimmerman (2000))

Dimensions of ACP Student Empowerment	Student Role	Faculty Role	Student-Empowerment Outcomes	Indicators of Student Learning
Intrapersonal	<p>Develop knowledge of course content - theory and associated skill sets</p> <p>Develop experience in working effectively and efficiently as a collaborative partner</p> <p>Develop experience applying newly learned theory and skills in the community to improve well-being</p>	<p>Respect and encompass diverse talents and ways of learning – accountability and flexibility</p> <p>Encourage active learning through class exercises that link student interest in contemporary social issues, course content, and work in the community</p> <p>Encourage student-faculty contact to assist students in developing their understanding of course material.</p>	<p>Confidence in ability to apply CP theory and analyze situations from a CP perspective in conversation.</p> <p>Confidence in ability to contribute to individual, organizational, and community well-being through application of CP theory and skills</p>	<p>Engagement in learning activities inside and outside classroom</p> <p>Final project oral presentations</p> <p>Feedback from community partners.</p> <p>Use of CP skill sets in primary work duties after graduation.</p>
Interactional	<p>Critical reflection on and development of personal and professional values, and, on socio-political environment related to issues of focus in class projects with community-based organizations.</p> <p>Develop understanding of the social-ecological approach and the role of social power in community life through field work.</p> <p>Learning about social issues and/or providing assistance to community-based organizations through organizationally and collaboratively determined goals</p>	<p>Model respect for diversity. Teach skills in listening and resolving conflict in respectful and constructive ways</p> <p>Support students in engaging in reflective practice and consciousness raising.</p> <p>Encourage collaboration</p> <p>Teach written and oral communication skills to enhance work with peers/community partners</p>	<p>Increased capacity for critical reflection and action.</p> <p>Competency in applying theories of social ecology and social power to contemporary social issues that impact communities.</p> <p>Development in ability to enact value on diversity through work in student groups with community partners.</p>	<p>Engagement in collaborative partnerships which reflect students' value on diversity</p> <p>Goals to guide collaborative work together are consistently used to manage conflict constructively.</p> <p>Self-evaluation papers focused on role of collaborative partnerships with student colleagues and with community based organizations.</p>
Behavioral	<p>Goal 1. Develop a foundation in theoretical concepts and principles of CP and its applications.</p> <p>Goal 2. Develop skill sets in CP practice that are applicable to work with community groups, non-profit organizations and social institutions.</p> <p>Goal 3. Recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of sociocultural diversity.</p> <p>Goal 4. Use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry and the scientific approach to solve problems.</p> <p>Goal 5. Develop communication skills necessary to work effectively with colleagues, community groups, non-profit organizations, and social institutions.</p> <p>Goal 6. Develop research and information competence and ability to use computers and other technology for multiple purposes.</p>	<p>Expectations of performance and learning activities are clearly communicated (e.g., in syllabus).</p> <p>Provision of prompt, constructive, and frequent feedback on all written work.</p> <p>Deliver course content.</p> <p>Facilitate work in groups.</p> <p>Facilitate individual/group work with personnel from host organization.</p> <p>Mentor students in community work related and unrelated to coursework or field study.</p> <p>Organize Ambassador (alumni) retreats and events.</p>	<p>Strengthened ability to apply CP theories and skills in community settings, successfully collaborate with peers and community partners, and communicate ACP activities through oral presentations and in writing.</p> <p>ACP Specialization-specific student learning outcomes correspond with goals. For example, with Goal 2, two of the six student learning outcomes (SLO) include:</p> <p>SLO 1: Engage in consultation and multidisciplinary collaboration with colleagues, community groups, non-profit organizations, and social institutions.</p> <p>SLO2: Identify and address ethical issues as they arise in the practice of community psychology.</p>	<p>Documented incremental improvement in oral and written communication skills:</p> <p>Written work Technical writing Oral presentations Projects</p> <p>Feedback from community partners</p> <p>Final project technical reports from the four core ACP courses.</p>
Longitudinal	<p>Participation in projects that span more than one quarter (10weeks) and address the same issue.</p> <p>Build ecological understanding and skill development in multiple settings and at multiple levels of analysis.</p>	<p>Develop/facilitate opportunities for students to participate in long-term projects</p> <p>Mentor students through longitudinal learning experiences (sometimes after they graduate)</p>	<p>Developed appreciation for the complexity and duration of community work focused on sustainable change approaches</p> <p>Contributions to well-being among individuals and organizations through community practice.</p>	<p>ACP Professional Portfolio</p> <p>Multiple learning experiences and work products which represent knowledge and skill development</p> <p>Development of long-term collaborative relationships in the community to promote well-being as ACP Ambassadors.</p>

Dimensions of ACP Student Empowerment

Below, we define each dimension of ACP student empowerment and illustrate associated roles, outcomes and indicators through student work in the four ACP core courses, field study, elective work, and/or non-curricular (independent of course credit) student activities.

Intrapersonal Dimension. This refers to a student's belief in their competence to promote individual, organizational and community well-being through their practice of ACP and the belief in their ability to influence their professional development and career opportunities. In the four ACP core courses and in our mentorship of students, we strive to **link student passion to course content in ACP to contemporary social issues to work in the community.** When students are able to simultaneously immerse themselves in these learning domains, they become more likely to develop confidence in their developing ACP skills. We also view peer support, primarily between students who work in groups, and faculty support, primarily through faculty supervision of course projects and mentoring activities, as critical to the development of student confidence in their competence to practice ACP and ability to influence their professional development.

Changes in student confidence are incrementally evident through work on course projects (i.e., supervision, group presentations, written feedback on technical reports) and most visible in student final project presentations highlighting the achievements of their collaborative work. This is especially true when skills developed in previous ACP core courses are applied in new ACP core courses, or, when students take on new and meaningful roles, or, when students experience multi-level change in their field work.

For example, two students in the Community Consultation and Collaboration course collaborated with a non-profit agency working to reunify former prostitute mothers exiting prison with their children in foster care. The students applied a skill-set acquired in the Psychoeducational Groups and In-Service Training Development course to two psychoeducational groups (one for parents and one for children) to educate them about reunification process. This learning experience provided these students with the opportunity to learn a new set of skills in community consultation and collaboration and supported them in applying and further developing a set of skills learned in a previous course. Additionally, the students gained experience

in developing an intervention on two ecological levels of analysis – at the meso level in their work with the consultee agency, and at the micro level in their work with the families. Finally, confidence in their ability to promote community well-being increased greatly because they were able to develop a set of small group interventions consistent with the personal and relational values for well-being espoused in the CP textbook we use in our theory-focused course.

Interactional Dimension. Increase critical awareness of school, community, and socio-political environments through analysis and reflection on work with peers and organizational partners. Each of the four ACP core courses includes a field component and a portion of the majority of class sessions is dedicated to the supervision of student work with host organizations. Students continuously process new information and link agency practices and ACP values, theory and practice within the context of collaborative teamwork with the host organization. While they engage in these multiple learning domains, they raise their consciousness to school, community, and sociopolitical environments and have the opportunity to reflect on these experiences with peers and faculty. As students progress through the core curriculum, their ability to enact their critical awareness into constructive collaborative activities in work groups noticeably matures.

One of our recent graduates published a commentary about her experience of learning collaboration. She cited trust and conflict as two major areas she was able to critically reflect on and develop her competency in collaboration (Marrero & Sarkisian, 2010). Class supervision is a primary setting in which we have observed the “ah-hah” moments. This is where students raise their critical awareness upon reflecting on some combination of their experience at an agency setting, their research, and/or their collaborative group work. Class supervision also provides learning opportunities for students to connect ACP course content to their work in the field and learn about how other groups in the class progress in their work with community partners as well.

Conflict and confrontation are two common issues that emerge in class supervision which we use as opportunities for students to engage in reflective practice, raising an individual's consciousness to their role in school, community, and sociopolitical environments. Below we provide examples of how conflict can manifest and be addressed in student work groups, and, how the issue of confrontation can

emerge and be addressed between student work groups and community partners.

In the Consultation and Collaboration, Program Development and Evaluation, and Prevention and Promotion courses we require students work in groups, develop common goals to promote accountability, and guide their collaborative work (process) together. The goals are periodically refined as students engage in their collaboration and experience obstacles intrinsic to community work. Additionally, student groups are periodically required to rate their performance on a Likert scale, discuss their ratings, and share what they learned with the class (For a more complete description of this exercise, see Marrero & Sarkisian, 2010). This exercise provides one structured way to promote student engagement in reflective practice of managing conflict in their collaborative work.

Within student groups, conflict commonly arises around issues of accountability to the group, due to unclear expectations, or not following through on project related tasks or deliverables. Students are quick to raise their awareness of inequity in group work, but are often unprepared to constructively resolve issues of group accountability. When this occurs, our pedagogical question becomes... "How can we encourage students to transform conflict into individual accountability and peer support conducive to successful collaboration?" Through student reflection on their goals to guide collaboration, expectations can be clarified and communications can be realigned – sometimes with guidance from faculty, sometimes with guidance from peers, and, sometimes both. As students mature through the program, they tend to move beyond the myth of equal division of labor and begin to practice meaningful ways by which to support each other and hold themselves and others accountable in constructive ways.

Between student groups and community partners, the issue of confrontation typically arises from the need for the student group to enact their critical awareness through confronting community partners with constructive feedback. This usually begins with some type of situation requiring confrontation which our students often fear initially. For example, students may find information that is evidence-based and contrary to the practice of the organization. The contradictions are sometimes great enough to stimulate constructive action based on students' awareness. However, moving from critical awareness to constructive action often requires support from faculty during supervision through guided reflection on issues within or across learning domains.

In a Program Development and Evaluation class, a group of students worked with the AULA Student Services Task Force to provide recommendations to further develop policies and programming addressing diversity issues on campus. When the student group became aware of the institutional inconsistencies between mission and practice, they were furious, especially since they are all women of color. Their anger, reflected in an early draft of their technical report provided a concrete indicator that they had reached a critical, yet not constructive position. After reflecting on where they were in their process during class supervision, they were able to use their frustration as fuel, transforming their criticism into constructive plans to implement diversity initiatives based on best practices identified in the research literature.

In the Community Consultation and collaboration course, a student group was collaborating with a mentoring program for youth emancipating from the foster care system. Through their research, the students became aware of many state standards and resources to assist programs, yet their community partner was not using any of them. They soon learned the program's staff had little knowledge of foster care or youth who have been in foster care systems for long periods of time. At first, the students were at a loss for how to proceed. Through class supervision, the students were able to identify a plan which would educate the director of the mentoring program about the resources available and benefit the further development of the program.

In the examples above, Maslow's well known quote... "If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail"... is relevant to student work with community partners as the quote underscores the importance of understanding how others conceptualize their problems and solutions. Additionally, it is beneficial for students to reflect on how their conceptualization of potential solutions may be clouded by their own intervention biases.

Behavioral Dimension. Development of competencies in ACP through engagement in group projects in the four ACP core courses, field study, elective, and, extracurricular community work. Students develop, practice and refine their skills in ACP in a variety of settings, but are observed by faculty primarily through course related work (i.e., supervision, drafts of technical reports, reflection papers, final technical reports, and final presentations) which reflects their interactions with peers and with community partners.

At the program level, we have recently revised our program goals through the program review process

(See Table 2). While we recognize student empowerment will vary for each student, we articulate specific program goals so students know the opportunities, expectations, and limitations of the ACP specialization. Through the use of curriculum mapping, we have developed a method to identify and evaluate the connection between ACP specialization goals, coursework, and student learning outcomes. The program review process has also provided us with opportunities for reflection on areas in which we can further develop the ACP specialization. For example, we recently underwent the peer review process to further develop the syllabus for our gateway course, community psychology theories and methods (Sarkisian & Taylor, 2010), and, we plan on repeating the process for our ACP core courses to continue the development of our courses and ACP specialization.

In the classroom, we believe faculty must model the behaviors they wish to see from their students. We achieve this through consistent **structure, support and feedback** in ACP coursework. Structurally, syllabi provide students with clear course expectations and rubrics provide specific instructions for individual assignments. Faculty support is provided to students through in-class supervision, email, and individual or group office hour meetings outside of class. Peer student support typically begins through course related activities and often extends beyond the classroom with students sometimes collaborating on community-related projects not related to course credit after they have worked together on one or more ACP core courses. Finally, feedback is provided (1) through weekly class supervision, (2) on all written work ranging between three to five drafts for each technical report and (3) immediately following the presentation of their final reports on the last day of class.

Longitudinal Dimension. The longitudinal dimension refers to student academic and professional development of competencies in ACP during one's program of study. Ideally, students are exposed to opportunities which build competencies in addressing social issues in a variety of community settings and at multiple levels of ecological analysis. And, through the four ACP core courses, field study, and extracurricular community-based work during school and after graduation, students have the opportunity to develop a wealth of experience in a short period of time (1-2 yrs).

For example, two students who completed the Psychoeducational Groups course in the previous quarter, formed a student group and began consulting with a non-profit organization resettling Iraqi

immigrants. The agency had difficulty in retaining relatives of immigrants who were required by law to act as hosts. The student group applied and developed their knowledge of a skill set learned in a previous course to a new problem – in a new course where they learned a new set of skills. Additionally, they continued their work together through their field study the following quarter and developed a manuscript for publication which was accepted shortly before they graduated (Gordon, Taylor, & Sarkisian, 2010). Nearly eight months after graduation from the program, they presented the paper at the Eastern Psychological Association conference independently (Gordon, Taylor, & Sarkisian, 2010). While this is an exemplar case, it has pushed the faculty to develop more opportunities for students to engage in similar long-term projects. The specialization now runs the Community, Social Justice, and Diversity Research Group, which serves as the primary vehicle for supporting student research, academic development, and scholarship.

A recent addition to our program is our development of criteria included in the ACP Professional Portfolio. The portfolio provides a venue for students to showcase their work in the ACP specialization and serves a marketable tool capturing the longitudinal dynamic of ACP student empowerment. Additionally, several students reported to us how their ACP portfolio was instrumental in their success during job interviews. They were able to produce an array of professional documents representing their best work. Programmatically, the portfolios serve as documentation of student learning through the ACP Specialization which benefits our program development and evaluation efforts.

Conclusion

In this paper, we used the ACP Specialization as a model to discuss how we work and develop an empowering educational setting conducive to graduate students' empowerment—through the enactment of CP values. Values driven pedagogy and student empowerment are critical to the development of practitioners whose work in the community will embrace the values of community psychology. The enactment of this process requires critical reflective practice on the part of community psychology program directors and faculty to ensure that course work and extracurricular supports for their students are consistent with the CP values espoused in the classroom.

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Appendix

Applied Community Psychology Specialization Professional Development Model

In addition to on-going academic advising and mentoring by program faculty, ACP provides students with the following opportunities to enhance their professional development:

New Student Conference

Students entering ACP meet with Specialization faculty to discuss their academic and professional goals and community experience. Using this information, faculty refer students to specific courses, other students, program alumni and community partners who can serve as resources and/or mentors in the achievement of student goals.

Professional Development Series

The Series provides students with tools and strategies for time management, resume development, professional networking, teaching, and a variety of other professional issues. The Specialization provides resource guides for each workshop to ensure that all students have access to the information.

Community Partnership Speakers Bureau (CPSB)

The CPSB provides support and supervision to students designing and implementing psychoeducational programs in the community. Students are also encouraged to create psychoeducational resource guides that are published through the CPSB and made available in the public domain through the AULA website.

Community, Social Justice, and Diversity Research Group

The research group supports and supervises student research. Faculty work closely with participating students to identify opportunities for them to present their work at conferences and to publish in professional journals. This is the only research group on the AULA campus.

ACP Professional Portfolio

As students near the end of their coursework in the Specialization, they prepare a professional portfolio (both hard copy and electronic). The portfolio showcases student achievements and work products prepared in the Specialization and the unique skills they have developed. Portfolios contain a resume/vita, letters of reference, and final projects from major coursework in the Specialization. Upon completion of their portfolios, graduating students prepare brief presentations of their work to share with members of the Specialization community and incoming students.