



**Challenges and Strategies in Promoting Empowering Academic Settings for Learning  
Community Psychology Practice Competencies**

Gregor V. Sarkisian and Sylvie Taylor  
Antioch University Los Angeles

**Keywords:** Community Psychology Practice Competencies, Community Psychology Professional and Graduate Education

**Author Biographies:** *Gregor V. Sarkisian*, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Master of Arts Psychology Program and teaches in the Applied Community Psychology Specialization at Antioch University Los Angeles, CA, USA. *Sylvie Taylor*, Ph.D., is a Professor in the Master of Arts in Psychology Program and is the founding Director of the Applied Community Psychology Specialization at Antioch University Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA, USA.

**Recommended Citation:** Sarkisian, G.V. and Taylor, S. (2016). Challenges and Strategies in Promoting Empowering Academic Settings for Learning Community Psychology Practice Competencies. *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*, 7(4), pages 1-13. Retrieved Day/Month/Year, from (<http://www.gjcpp.org/>).

## Challenges and Strategies in Promoting Empowering Academic Settings for Learning Community Psychology Practice Competencies

### Abstract

This article will provide readers with practical strategies to develop meaningful opportunities for students to gain experience with community psychology practice competencies in educational settings. First, the authors will provide a brief program profile to better understand opportunities students have to gain experience in competencies within the Applied Community Psychology Specialization at Antioch University Los Angeles. Next, challenges in teaching students to gain experience with community psychology practice competencies at the master's level will be presented. Finally, practical strategies for overcoming these challenges will be discussed.

Literature on training in community psychology emerged in the 1970s shortly after the field's inception. These early models were either focused on training researchers (Iscoe & Spielberger, 1970) or research practitioners. Writings on training for practice were formative in nature, conveying a theme of the incompatibility of community work within university structures (e.g., Kelly, 1970; Kelly, 1971; Newbrough, 1972; & Newbrough, 1973). Most of the literature on training for practice since then has focused on models of training specific to individual programs (e.g., Weinstein, 1981) with informative insights, but not necessarily knowledge that is transferable across programs, as there were no universally agreed upon criteria for a practice-focused education. In 2010, Kloos proposed three levels of training that are useful for educators to articulate the depth of mastery in which students are trained – *Exposure*, learning the value and applications; *Experience*, supervised practice; and, *Expertise*, multiple experiences over years in selected competencies – and provide a common language for educators to better understand training programs. In a previous article (Taylor & Sarkisian, 2011), the authors of the current paper articulated a values-driven pedagogy for students to gain a training level of *Experience* (Kloos, 2010) in community psychology practice at the master's level within a clinical psychology program that

may be transferable to similar programs but likely incomparable to doctoral programs training students to gain a training level of *Expertise* in community psychology practice.

The emergence of community psychology practice competencies (Dalton & Wolfe, 2012) has provided educators with criteria (although not necessarily agreed upon) to critically reflect on curriculum and to develop existing or new opportunities for students to gain a wide variety of skill sets in community psychology practice. The authors of the current paper have utilized curriculum mapping (Sarkisian & Taylor, 2013) with students (Sarkisian, et al., 2013) as a tool to assess practice competencies in the curriculum and to develop opportunities for students to gain exposure and experience with community psychology practice competencies. Yet, many of the practice competencies are complex and dynamic in nature, presenting challenges to the process of teaching. Academic institutions have fixed academic terms either in classrooms, or more recently, cyberspace-based, that are often incompatible with the types of field-based, community-driven projects that offer the best opportunities for students to gain exposure, experience, and expertise in community psychology practice competencies. In addition, college and university faculty may be limited in the range of practice competencies they can teach or supervise in

the field, and students may have limited formal exposure to the community psychology practice competencies. The purpose of the current article is (1) to develop a training context through a brief program profile, (2) to present challenges faced in the process of teaching practice competencies from a values-driven community psychology pedagogy, and (3) to present practical strategies used to overcome these challenges faced in the process of teaching.

### **Applied Community Psychology (ACP) Specialization Program Profile**

The Applied Community Psychology (ACP) specialization is a 17-unit optional course of study for master's level psychology students at Antioch University Los Angeles.

#### *ACP student demographics*

To date, 125 students have completed the ACP specialization as graduates of the Master's program. Approximately 30 to 40 students are enrolled in the specialization at any given time. The majority of the students in the specialization are adult learners (mean age=37.5), primarily female (79.2%), and typically working in addition to attending school (52.3% full-time, 47.7% part-time). More than 55% of ACP students self-identify as belonging to an ethnic minority group, with the majority identifying as African-American or Black (34%), and nearly 21% identify as LGBTQ. Most ACP students enter the program with prior experience in community work, but few have had formal training in community psychology or practice competencies.

#### *Curriculum and Community Psychology Practice Competencies*

Students complete an introductory community psychology course – *Community Psychology: Theories & Methods*; four core courses – *Community Consultation and Collaboration, Program Development and Evaluation, Prevention and Promotion, and*

*Psychoeducational Groups and In-Service Training Development*; a field study – *Field Study in ACP*; and elective units in ACP. See Taylor and Sarkisian (2011) for a complete description of the pedagogy – mentoring, student professional development and student empowerment – used to promote an empowering educational setting through the ACP specialization. In the introductory community psychology course, students are *Exposed* to all practice competencies through reading (i.e., Dalton & Wolfe, 2012) and class discussion, and students gain a training level of *Experience* in *Ecological Perspectives and Collaboration*. Through supervised fieldwork in core courses and the field study course, students gain a training level of *Experience* in *Foundational Principles, Program Development, Implementation and Management, Prevention and Health Promotion, Small Group Processes, Resource Development, Consultation and Organizational Development, Collaboration, Information Dissemination and Building Public Awareness, and, Program Evaluation*.

While each core course has a primary focus on one or two practice competencies (e.g., the Community Consultation and Collaboration course focuses on the competency Consultation and Organizational Development), all core courses include secondary foci on developing experience with other practice competencies (i.e., Collaboration and Small Group Processes). One of the benchmarks of ACP is the inclusion of supervised fieldwork in the four core courses (in addition to the required field study) allowing students to gain a training level of *Experience* with selected practice competencies. Additionally, students often work in groups as consultation teams to further develop collaboration skills.

#### *Fieldwork related to core courses*

The majority of students gain fieldwork experience collaborating with community-based non-profit organizations and public

schools. The issues of focus for students tend to be tied to the course content (e.g., in the Program Development and Evaluation course, students work collaboratively with the organization to develop an evaluation plan). The populations served and social issues addressed by these organizations vary greatly. In the Community Consultation and Collaboration course, populations served by non-profit organizations have included: health of African-American families, empowerment of Latina teens, mothers who were prostitutes seeking child reunification, youth and young adults emancipating from the foster care system, empowerment of transgender youth, seniors who identify as LGBT, people with HIV/AIDS, cultural enrichment opportunities for Pilipino youth, and well-being of child caregivers to name a few. This variation reflects the diverse professional interests of students in the ACP specialization.

### *Entry and non-entry into the Applied Community Psychology (ACP) Specialization*

Students enter the ACP specialization in one of two ways. Some students have knowledge of community psychology and elect to join the specialization upon admission to the master's program, but many students learn about ACP in the introductory community psychology course and decide to join the specialization when they see the curriculum and professional development opportunities resonate closely with their academic goals for professional development. Once they complete the introductory community psychology course, they can proceed in completing the core coursework, field study, and electives. The introductory community psychology course is a requirement for all students in the clinical psychology master's program and will typically include students who are not necessarily interested in community psychology content. These students complete 3 units of community psychology and 87 unit of clinically focused coursework, often leading to a strong bias

toward reactive individualistic solutions to promoting well-being.

### **Challenges and Strategies in Promoting Empowering Academic Settings**

These challenges and strategies were developed through the authors' experience in teaching students who were interested, not necessarily interested and uninterested (at least initially), in community psychology content for the past 10 years. While students in the introductory community psychology course are provided with a training level of *Exposure* to all practice competencies, students gain a level of *Experience* in the practice competencies described in the ACP Program Profile. The purpose of sharing these challenges and strategies is to provide practical support to teachers of practice competencies, especially those who may be new to teaching them or who are situated in similar programs hoping to provide students with a meaningful training level of *Experience* with the competencies.

#### *Challenge 1: Embrace diverse learning styles and expand student potential*

Students often arrive academically unprepared in terms of training in foundations of psychology, writing skill, and APA format. Additionally, some students have more experience working in communities than others. In recognition of these variations, the following strategies are used to embrace diverse learning styles and expand student potential.

**Strategy 1a: Facilitating development of academic writing skills.** In the introductory community psychology course (see Sarkisian & Taylor, 2010 for link to course syllabus), we have developed a detailed final paper rubric to improve clarity of expectations for students' written work. Additionally, we took a developmental learning approach to writing and broke the term paper into three manageable sections due as drafts weeks 3, 5, and 8 of a 10-week quarter. Papers are

returned a week after they are submitted with comprehensive feedback based on the final paper rubric. Students have a week to make revisions for each draft, receive an additional round of feedback, if warranted, and then have a final chance to make revisions before the final paper is turned in on the last day of class. Students are only evaluated on the final product they submit the last week of class.

In three of the core courses, students develop technical reports, while in the fourth students develop a psychoeducational group or in-service presentation along with the accompanying materials (e.g., curriculum, brochures, informational resources, etc.). The courses with technical reports utilize a similar – write, review, revise, repeat – process, with student groups submitting drafts for feedback before the final product is due the last day of class. Materials developed for the Psychoeducational Groups and In-Service Training Development course are also reviewed and revised throughout the quarter. Through the provision of ongoing and timely written feedback during the term of a course, and over multiple academic quarters, we have seen many students advance their academic and professional writing abilities.

Strategy 1b: Course projects. Course projects involving multiple learning outcomes (e.g., oral presentations in class and with community partners, group-written technical reports, psychoeducational group and in service training materials – brochures, curricula, informational resources) provide students the opportunity to practice many of the skills needed in their community work after graduation – the ability to communicate with different audiences, write concise informative reports to different stakeholder groups, collaborate effectively, and develop and deliver training.

Strategy 1c: Mentoring. While we certainly strive to mentor students in the more traditional academic activities such as grant

writing, applying to doctoral programs, and publishing, we also spend a significant amount of time mentoring students interested in developing or supporting small community-based programs or becoming effective agents of change on small and large scales. Part of our efforts to model an inclusive learning environment means that we can't judge a student's potential to be an effective agent of change solely on their academic and writing ability, especially when we know it often takes much more. Students who may have limited potential to pursue traditional academic activities often possess skill sets (e.g., street credibility) that many academicians do not possess. And students with a history of low quality prior academic experiences typically require extra support with writing and socialization to the expectations of professional psychology and master's level work.

One of our graduates entered our program with a great deal of grass-roots community experience and deep experiential understanding of the transformative value of empowerment and community engagement. A life-long resident of one of the most densely populated, under-resourced communities of Los Angeles, he experienced life-long exposure to community and interpersonal violence, crime, dysfunctional schools, and inadequate housing. During his youth he had been involved in a gang, struggled with substance abuse, and had numerous entanglements with law enforcement. Having sustained over a decade of sobriety and stabilized his own living situation, he came to our program eager to give back to the community in which he lived, very aware of the fact that he needed academic preparation in order to advance his goals and, "for a Black man from the hood to be taken seriously by the powers that be." For nearly a decade he had been running informal parenting classes and support groups for parolees striving to reengage with their children out of his apartment living room.

His presentation was one of the bravado and overconfidence necessary to survive in a rough neighborhood. He would frequently arrive on campus blaring rap music, toothpick in mouth and hat on head. He struggled with writing in each of his courses, although at a visceral level he “knew” the material and understood it better than some of his more polished peers. He was escorted to the ACP Specialization Director’s office by a member of the Admissions staff, who informed the Director that she needed to “take care of him.” Thus began an 18-month journey of weekly meetings characterized by heart-to-hearts about academic writing and the expectations of a professional environment with respect to attire, engagement, and language usage. The process required deep mutual commitments between student and faculty to make up for years of “well-meaning” teachers and instructors who “let things slide” academically. A significant part of that commitment was one we took as a program to ensure that all students depart the ACP with the requisite skills to work effectively in community settings and to carry themselves as professionals. Sometimes this meant that 10 or 15 drafts of a paper would exchange hands until it was strong, well-written, and conceptually sound. As an alum of our program, he is now the Director of a program at one of the flagship non-profit organizations in Los Angeles.

Strategy 1d: Student interest as a catalyst for meaningful engagement in coursework and fieldwork. In the introductory community psychology course, we use an exercise to choose student groups where everyone is allowed to put a topic (i.e., social issue) of great interest on the board. Then, students vote on the topic most interesting to them, and tally marks are made next to topics. The process of voting is repeated until there are at least two people associated with each topic. Topics with no tally marks are erased from the board, and the student groups are formed. In the ACP core courses, students choose the

organizations with which to collaborate, reinforcing the idea of working on community issues of importance to oneself. Students present a summary of their organizational contact and potential issues of focus to the class. Thus, students are able to form groups based on their interest in working with a particular organization or population.

*Challenge 2: Facilitating conflict, unsafe moments, and a respectful space for academic debate and professional growth*

When a respectful atmosphere among students can be achieved in the classroom, the opportunity to move from conflict to constructive dialogue often follows. Students often have limited conflict resolution skills. And students often carry an expectation that “safety” in the classroom is or can be a constant state.

Strategy 2a: Managing inclusivity and safety in class. Through modeling a respectful classroom environment, students are more likely to feel like their viewpoints are included and are more likely to engage in dialogue around values – including conflict of values – and more open to diverse viewpoints.

In the introductory community psychology course, value conflicts often emerge and may grow from frustration to personal attacks or attacks on specific groups. Ground rules for mutually respectful academic debate, class discussion, and conduct are articulated in the syllabus and reviewed the first day of class (see Sarkisian & Taylor, 2010 for link to course syllabus), yet conflictual situations often emerge due to the course content and varied perspectives of students. These situations require faculty intervention to stop a bad situation from getting worse, restore safety, model expectations for academic discourse, and have students practice. This is typically accomplished through (1) stopping the conversation or argument, (2) letting everyone take a moment of silence to reflect on the transaction(s) that occurred, (3)

explaining how and when the conversation went from academic to non-academic, (4) explaining how the conversation could have been continued, often through restoring the focus on observable actions that can be critically examined, and (5) by providing students with an opportunity to continue the discussion.

Strategy 2b: Reading and class discussion. It is often challenging for students, especially in the introductory community psychology course, to recognize and appreciate the positive elements of opposing views. We have had great success in beginning the process of helping students make space for this by discussing Ryan's (1994) Fair Play and Fair Share perspectives on equality in class – the idea that equality can have seemingly opposing definitions and the ways society rewards both views.

Strategy 2c: Fieldwork supervision to support the development of confidence in developing practice skills. In the ACP core courses, students are often fearful or have a low level of confidence whenever they are in a situation where they have to provide critical feedback to a collaborating community partner. This is common and natural as most of our students are new to community psychology, new to gaining experience with practice competencies, and new to acting in the role of a consultant. Thus, we utilize supervision to provide support, modeling, and the opportunity to try out strategies.

Supervision will often include students practicing difficult conversations with collaborating community partners before they occur. For example, in one section of the Program Development and Evaluation course, a student group was working with a local foundation to develop an evaluation plan for a youth mentoring program for teens in foster care that just completed its first year of operation. Upon review of the program documents and informal interviews with program staff, it became clear to the student

group that the stated problems of the mentoring program were likely due to no training for mentors, no training in or experience with the child protective service system or the populations served and problems they commonly experience, minimal articulation of the program, and no training in multicultural awareness – and all of the program staff were White and upper class. The group did not want to have this conversation, and the class was upset that the program was allowed to exist.

After being told by their instructor that this was a great opportunity, they looked petrified. The student group was asked to list the assets the foundation brings to the table, and they could quickly list them – they want to help, they have resources, and they are open to learning. Once the student group was able to make space for an alternative perspective (asset-based), they automatically shifted their strategy from program evaluation to program development – helping the foundation plan training for mentors in all the topics listed above and articulate program goals, objectives, and activities, as they were not yet ready for evaluation. Next, they rehearsed the major talking points of the upcoming conversation with their community partner (i.e., the foundation) and became more confident in their new strategy after shifting perspective on their original assessment that the organization was doomed to failure.

*Challenge 3: Deepening understanding of the intersection of human diversity and social oppression*

In a program with a student body as diverse as ours, we are often confronted with students who possess a range of knowledge and experiences with issues of diversity and social oppression. At one end of the spectrum are students who have enjoyed a great deal of social privilege who often have a superficial understanding of diversity and the impact of social oppression. A number of our students

have a great deal of theoretical, academic knowledge with respect to diversity issues, theories of power and privilege, and social oppression – with lived experience ranging from none to a great deal. We also have many students who have extensive lived experiences of disempowerment, discrimination, and marginalization. The combination of these experiences, when revealed in class or during the course of collaborative project work, has the potential to create powerful learning experiences for students, faculty, and community partners. We encourage students to deeply explore these understandings.

Strategy 3a: Reading, film, and class discussion. We assign readings and engage in class discussions using articles that illustrate the dehumanizing effects of social oppression on people from diverse backgrounds to raise student awareness of how social oppression manifests into often times well-intentioned but dehumanizing behaviors. These include:

- Lukes (1974) and Gaventa (1980) – Three-dimensional approach to social power.
- Freire (2005) – Sadistic love.
- Sue, et al. (2007) – Racial microaggressions in everyday life.

We use the film,  *Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street*  (Mahan, Lipman, Neuburger, & Ragazzi, 1996) as a tool for understanding social ecology, diversity, and social oppression. The film chronicles the rebirth of a community through citizen action and engagement. The film serves as an important catalyst for discussion of how residents of poor, marginalized communities are disproportionately impacted by failed social policies and easily fall prey to community redevelopment initiatives that do not include local residents in the plans for the future.

Strategy 3b: Fieldwork Supervision. Through supervision of student fieldwork with collaborative partners, faculty are able to

utilize the experiences of student work groups in raising awareness of social oppression and diversity issues with the entire class. Some of these methods include: confronting privilege directly, directing students to appropriate resources, helping students engage in difficult conversations with themselves or community partners, and modeling conflict resolution or reframing skills.

*Challenge 4: Raising awareness of the paradoxical nature of organizations, social systems, and institutions*

Students often have a limited understanding of how organizations and social systems function and expect they operate in logical ways. When they raise their awareness of the paradoxical nature of how the collaborating community partners function, students often become frustrated in their process of accepting the world as it is, especially when their work involves balancing high hopes with planning realistic change efforts with community groups and organizations.

Strategy 4a: Evidence of differences “you” can make. Providing examples of ACP student projects is an effective strategy to illustrate the very real ways in which master’s level students can enact their values through their work with communities. It also provides newer students with concrete examples of the scope of change they can expect to create during their time in the ACP specialization.

Strategy 4b: Reading and class discussion. Through assigned readings and class discussion in the introductory community psychology course, we try to encourage students to shift from introspection to focusing on understanding community conditions and populations affected by utilizing outside resources. Students who are not in the ACP specialization often begin their approach by conceptualizing solutions with little or no information from outside sources. Our challenge is to help students shift their way of thinking so they develop a deeper

understanding of the problem from multiple sources before conceptualizing how things could change. Understanding the paradoxical nature and iatrogenic effect of service systems and treatment-only approaches helps raise student awareness of the complexity of the way things are in the world. Some of our favorite resources for stimulating these discussions include:

- Ryan (1971) – Blaming the victim.
- Seidman & Rappaport (1986) – Unexamined premises of social problem definition.
- McKnight (1991) – The iatrogenic effects of social services on clients and communities.
- Freire (2005) – Challenging the status quo through exploring the banking model of education vs. the problem posing model.
- Albee (1995) – The role of exploitation in preventing mental health problems.
- Weick (1986) – Small Wins to illustrate how realistic changes can occur.

Strategy 4c: Structured fieldwork to purposefully shift the sand. The ACP specialization is structured in such a way that students conduct fieldwork in all core courses and engage in real world learning. Students quickly come to the realization that how things are done in the books is usually not how they are done in the real world. Sometimes things change mid-course and without warning (e.g., programs close, leadership changes, newly identified information changes scope of work, etc.). These unplanned changes force students to develop their ability to adapt to new situations in the role of a consultant. While students choose the community partners they work with, the community partners identify the initial scope of work because we know consultants are *not* hired to work on issues they are interested in if they have little or no

relevance to the community partner's stated needs. We are most successful in our mentoring of students' fieldwork when we adopt Freire's (2005) approach, valuing students as capable, competent learners who have the ability to problem solve and act effectively in community settings.

Strategy 4d: Management of student fieldwork to promote the likelihood of a positive field learning experience. An important component to our supervision of students' fieldwork is not letting them take on more than they can accomplish in a ten-week quarter. Student workload is formalized through letters of agreement students develop with the community partners. Letters of agreement begin as a conversation with community partners; students then develop a draft of their letter of agreement, and it is reviewed several times by faculty and the community partner before it is signed. With this structured groundwork, supervision can then shift to supporting students' practice activities, especially when they are in the thick of confusion, anxiety, and uncertainty about aspects of their consultations with community partners.

*Challenge 5: Conceptualizing problems and solutions with an ecological lens*

Because students are socialized and complete coursework and clinical training within the larger clinical psychology program, they often conceptualize problems and focus on solutions that are exclusively individualistic or psychological in nature. Teaching the levels of analysis and principles of ecology (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010) in the introductory community psychology course is consistently a challenge.

Strategy 5a: Conceptual tools. Conceptual tools are useful in bridging the theory-practice divide. The levels of analysis and principles of ecology provide a useful structure, both in understanding the problem and in developing social change strategies. In the introductory community psychology

course, students discuss, develop charts of social issues using the levels of analysis and principles of ecology on the dry-erase board, and define the levels, illustrate principles of ecology, and propose multilevel change efforts to address a community issue in their term papers. In core coursework, such as the consultation and community collaboration course, students develop an eco-organizational genogram (similar to a family genogram used in psychotherapy) to visualize how their community partner organization fits into a larger community context. Understanding the larger context often leads to the tapping of previously overlooked community resources and conceptualizing solutions from an ecological lens.

#### Strategy 5b: Experiential learning exercise.

The System (Sarkisian, 2016) is a multi-level social service simulation that provides students with an opportunity to experience the role of a client, front-line worker, or administrator in a changing system. The purpose of the exercise is to stimulate ecological thinking in the context of social power. After the exercise, a debriefing process occurs where students read their scripts and share their experience in their role. The system changers (i.e., administrators) describe their roles last, and through reading their scripts, reveal the driving forces of change that took place during the exercise. Just as the students come to the realization of how oppressive social service systems can be, we shift our discussion to empowerment.

Strategy 5c: Multiple supervised practice experiences. There is no substitute for practice. Through the four ACP core courses and field study course, students are guaranteed five structured learning opportunities to develop a training level of *Experience* in Ecological Perspectives and other practice competencies over time.

#### *Challenge 6: Developing capacity to be an effective collaborator*

Students sometimes have limited experience and skills in collaboration. Students require the most support in developing this skill when fieldwork in the ACP core courses nears the end of the quarter. We consider collaboration to be the glue that bonds the practice competencies taught in the ACP specialization together. Thus, practicing collaboration through experiential learning is part of every course – in class exercises, small group processes between students, field work in real world settings, facilitating experiences for students to develop new professional roles (e.g., consultant, evaluator), and training students how to utilize practical tools for community building.

Strategy 6a: Small group processes. The Group Goals Exercise (Marrero & Sarkisian, 2010) is used in the introductory community psychology course and several of the ACP core courses. This exercise prompts students working in groups to collectively develop principles to guide their group process in successfully achieving various course outcomes (e.g., final paper, technical reports, class presentations, presentations to community partners). Students rate themselves and their group partners at specific intervals throughout the quarter and have time to discuss their ratings, reformulate principles to guide group process, and raise their awareness of their work with other partners.

Strategy 6b: Experiential learning exercise. The Community Coalition Simulation (Wolff & Sarkisian, 2013) is an exercise that simulates the work of a community coalition facing many challenges. Participants are provided roles and scripts and have the opportunity to practice collaborating under conditions that were based on real work with coalitions. This exercise includes follow up questions related to multiple practice competencies, but the

focus of the simulated coalition's work is on collaboration during the exercise.

Strategy 6c: Facilitating opportunities for role expansion. By having students do all of the legwork in developing relationships and letters of agreement with community partners for ACP core courses and field study, we have found students develop a stronger sense of responsibility and accountability that helps them develop their skills in collaboration.

Strategy 6d: Facilitating opportunities to develop a training level of Experience with practice tools that utilize collaboration and are relatively simple to learn and apply. Two such practice tools include the Tearless Logic Model (Lien, et al., 2011) and the Community Narration approach (Olson & Jason, 2011). We have utilized these tools in the Program Development and Evaluation course as well as in various ACP elective workshops.

## Conclusion

The current article presents a program profile (i.e., student demographics, curriculum and community psychology practice competencies, fieldwork, and program entry/non-entry) to develop a training context within which faculty face challenges in promoting empowering academic settings. Next, the authors presented six challenges and accompanying strategies they use to promote a training level of *Exposure* and *Experience* with community psychology practice competencies.

- (1) Embrace diverse learning styles and expand student potential:
  - 1a. Facilitating development of academic writing skills;
  - 1b. Course projects;
  - 1c. Mentoring; and
  - 1d. Student interest as a catalyst for meaningful engagement in coursework and fieldwork.

- (2) Facilitating conflict, unsafe moments, and a respectful space for academic debate and professional growth:
  - 2a. Managing inclusivity and safety in class;
  - 2b. Reading and class discussion; and
  - 2c. Fieldwork supervision to support the development of confidence in developing practice skills.
- (3) Deepening understanding of the intersection of human diversity and social oppression:
  - 3a. Reading, film, and class discussion and
  - 3b. Fieldwork supervision.
- (4) Raising awareness to the paradoxical nature of organizations, social systems, and institutions:
  - 4a. Evidence of differences "you" can make;
  - 4b. Reading and class discussion;
  - 4c. Structured fieldwork to purposefully shift the sand; and
  - 4d. Management of student fieldwork to promote the likelihood of a positive field learning experience.
- (5) Conceptualizing problems and solutions with an ecological lens:
  - 5a. Conceptual tools;
  - 5b. Experiential learning exercise – The System; and
  - 5c. Multiple supervised practice experiences.
- (6) Developing capacity to be an effective collaborator:
  - 6a. Small group processes;
  - 6b. Experiential learning exercise – Community Coalition Simulation;

- 6c. Facilitating opportunities for role expansion; and
- 6d. Facilitating opportunities to develop a training level of *Experience* with practice tools that utilize collaboration and are relatively simple to learn and apply.

## References

- Albee, G. W. (1995). Counseling and primary prevention. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly*, 8(3), 205-211.
- Dalton, J., & Wolfe, S. (2012). Competencies for community psychology practice: Draft for review. *The Community Psychologist* 45(4), 7-14.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Gaventa, J. (1980). Power and participation. In *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (pp. 3-32). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Iscove, I., & Spielberger, C. D. (Eds.). (1970). *Community psychology: Perspectives in training and research*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Kelly, J. G. (1970). Antidotes for arrogance: Training for community psychology. *American Psychologist*, 25, 524-531.
- Kelly, J. G. (1971). Qualities for the community psychologist. *American Psychologist*, 26, 897-903.
- Kloos, B. (2010). Creating setting for training in collaborative community practice. *The Community Psychologist*, 43(2), 10.
- Lien, A. D., Greenleaf, J. P., Lemke, M. K., Hakim, S. M., Swink, N. P., Wright, R., & Meissen, G. (2011). Tearless logic model. *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*, 2(2), 1-12. Retrieved 19/05/2016, from <http://www.gjcpp.org/>.
- Lukes, S. (1974). *Power: A Radical View*. London: The Macmillan Press LTD.
- Mahan, L., Lipman, M., Neuburger, J., & Ragazzi, C. (1996). *Holding ground: The rebirth of Dudley Street*. [N.J.]: New Day Films.
- Marrero, L., & Sarkisian, G. V. (2010). Learning and teaching collaboration in the Applied Community Psychology (ACP) specialization. *The Community Psychologist*, 43(4), 15-16.
- McKnight, J. (1991). Services are bad for people: You're either a citizen or a client. *Organizing*, Sp/Sum, 45-48.
- Nelson, G., & Prilleltensky, I. (2010). *Community Psychology: In Pursuit of Liberation and Well-Being (2nd Ed.)*. Palgrave Macmillan. [ISBN: 978-0-230-21995-3]
- Newbrough, J. R. (1972). Community psychology. *American Psychologist*, 27, 770-772.
- Newbrough, J. R. (1973). Community psychology: A new holism. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 1, 201-211.
- Olson, B. D., & Jason, L. A. (2011). The community narration (CN) approach: Understanding a group's identity and cognitive constructs through personal and community narratives. *Global Journal of Community Practice*, 2(1), 1-7. Retrieved 19/05/2016, from <http://www.gjcpp.org/>.
- Ryan, W. (1971). *Blaming the Victim*. New York: Random House.
- Ryan, W. (1994). Many cooks, brave men, apples, and oranges: How people think about equality. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 22(1), 25-35.
- Sarkisian, G. V. (2016). *The System: A Multi-Level Social Service Simulation*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Sarkisian, G. V., Saleem, M. A., Simpkin, J., Weidenbacher, A., Bartko, N., & Taylor, S. (2013). A learning journey II: Learned course maps as a basis to explore how students learned community psychology practice competencies in a community coalition

building course. *Global Journal of community psychology practice*, 4(4), 1-12. Retrieved 12/5/2016, from (<http://www.gjcpp.org/>).

Sarkisian, G. V. & Taylor, S. (2010). PSY 545A Community psychology: Theories and methods (3 units). Division 2 of the American Psychological Association, Society for the Teaching of Psychology, Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology, Project Syllabus.<http://teachpsych.org/resources/Documents/otrp/syllabi/gs10community.pdf>.

Sarkisian, G. V. & Taylor, S. (2013). A learning journey I: Curriculum mapping as a tool to assess and integrate community psychology practice competencies in graduate education programs. *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*, 4(4), xx-xx. Retrieved 12/5/2016, from (<http://www.gjcpp.org/>).

Seidman, E., & Rappaport, J. (1986). Framing the issues. In E. Seidman & J. Rappaport (Eds.), *Redefining social problems* (pp. 1-8). New York: Plenum Press.

Sue, D.W., Capodilupo, C.M., Torino, G.C., Bucceri, J.M., Holder, A.M.B., Nadal, K.L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, 62(4), 271-286.

Taylor, S., & Sarkisian, G. V. (2010). *Applied Community Psychology Specialization: Seven Year Program Review Self-Study (Winter 2002-Spring 2009)*. Antioch University, Los Angeles: Authors.

Taylor, S., & Sarkisian, G. V. (2011). Community psychology values-driven pedagogy: The foundation for empowering educational settings. *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*, 2(2), 19-30. Retrieved 12/5/2016, from (<http://www.gjcpp.org/>).

Weick, K. (1986). Small wins: Redefining the scale of social issues. In E. Seidman & J. Rappaport (Eds.), *Redefining social problems* (pp. 29-48). New York: Plenum Press.

Weinstein, R. S. (1981). Teaching community intervention in a clinical program: Reflections in the themes of supervision. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 9, 681-696.

Wolff, T., & Sarkisian, G. V. (2013). Community coalition simulation: Experiential learning of community psychology practice competencies. *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*, 4(4), xx-xx. Retrieved 12/5/2016, from (<http://www.gjcpp.org/>).