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Community Psychology in the Community College Setting: Strengths and Challenges

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Community Psychology in the Community College Setting: Strengths and Challenges

Abstract

Within the field of community psychology there is growing recognition of the role of undergraduate education in community psychology training as a primary introduction to the field. In this [recent] discourse however, the unique position of the community college has been rendered invisible. This omission is critical given that approximately half of all undergraduate students in the U.S. are educated through the community colleges (CCRC n.d.). The community college mission also reflects the foundational principles of community psychology as it prioritizes open access to education, responsiveness to community need, and equity in higher education for individuals to achieve social mobility (Dougherty, Lahr, & Morest, 2017). In this article, the author used the development and implementation of a community psychology course at a two-year Hispanic-Serving Institution as a case example of the utility of the community college to advance community psychology goals. Distinct strengths and challenges of a two-year college setting are presented. Recommendations for undergraduate faculty teaching community psychology are presented.

Introduction

Undergraduate education as a primary vehicle to introduce students to community psychology is only a recent emphasis in the field. The role of the community college in this discourse, however, is conspicuously absent. This omission is critical given that approximately half of all undergraduate students in the U.S. are educated through the community colleges and a disproportionately higher number of non-traditional students, low-income, first-generation, African American, and Latinx students are enrolled in community colleges (CCRC n.d.). The community college mission also reflects the foundational principles of community psychology with its emphasis on open community access to education, responsiveness to community need, and equity in higher education for individuals to achieve social mobility (Dougherty, Lahr, & Morest, 2017). Thus, the community college environment presents a robust opportunity for community psychology to advance its intended goals.

In an effort to galvanize the benefits of the community college setting, the present author developed a community psychology course specifically for students enrolled in a two-year Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Guided by the principles and competencies of community psychology, this course is deeply rooted in critical and community engagement pedagogies, is a designated service-learning course which integrates ongoing reflective practice and community based research experience. The purpose of this article is threefold: 1) to outline the contextually specific course development considerations of a community psychology course at the community college level; 2) to make visible the distinct strengths and challenges facing community psychology students and faculty at community colleges and; 3) to discuss the development of a community based participatory research lab specifically designed for the college's African American and Latinx student support programs. The author contends that the community college system is fertile ground for community psychology to extend its reach and actualize

its foundational principles. Yet, the complex diversity, limited two year setting, and modest resources present distinct challenges.

Community College

The community college dates back to early 20th century when college was limited primarily to society's elite (Bailey & Jaggars, 2016; Dougherty, Lahr, & Morest, 2017). The junior college, as it was initially known, allowed access to a larger portion of lower income populations. Some argue that the establishment of the junior college was a way to cement the cultural and educational elitism of the time that allowed only individuals from upper social classes or those deemed the most intellectually capable access to upper level undergraduate education (Drury, 2003). Such a two-tier system was arguably designed to allow universities to focus primarily on research while the junior college served as an extension of the secondary (high school) curriculum. It offered terminal occupational education and vocational training to prepare its students for the workforce (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014; Drury, 2003). The junior college was later called the community college to refer to publicly funded, two-year colleges that are connected to and embedded within its local community (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014; Dougherty, Lahr, & Morest, 2017).

Initially, the community college was not widely accepted. Yet, it experienced significant growth following the Great Depression and again during the 1960s and 1970s as more individuals returned from war and sought education and training to enter the labor force (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014) and contribute to the economic growth of the time. The historic role of the community college in training workers continues to date. While numbers vary across institutions, a majority of degrees and certificates awarded by community colleges are in occupational education (Dougherty, Lahr, & Morest, 2017) although degrees and certificates continue to be offered across the liberal arts, humanities, and the sciences. Generally, workforce preparation "ranges from preparing students for their first job to retraining unemployed workers and welfare recipients, upgrading the skills of employed workers, assisting owners of small business, and helping communities with economic development planning" (Dougherty, Lahr, & Morest, 2017, p. 6). Developmental education remains an essential component of community college which includes courses such as English as a second language (ESL), dual high school enrollment, as well as non-credit courses often in primary subjects such as English, math, and writing (Bailey & Jaggers, 2016; Dougherty, Lahr, & Morest, 2017). Approximately two thirds of community college students require developmental courses to adequately prepare them for college level coursework (Bailey & Jaggers, 2016).

Today, community colleges educate a large number of undergraduate students. During the 2016-2017 academic year, approximately 8.7 million students were enrolled in community colleges in the U.S. (CCRC, n.d.). Community colleges also have older students and more ethnic and racial diversity than their four-year university counterparts (Bailey & Jaggers, 2016; Dougherty, Lahr, & Morest, 2017). Recent data indicates that 34% of undergraduates are enrolled at community colleges and among recent graduates, almost half report having attended community college during their undergraduate career (CCRC, n.d.). Community colleges also educate a large number of African American, Latinx, low-income, and first generation students. Forty four percent of Latinx students and 35% of Black students were enrolled at community colleges last year (CCRC, n.d). Given its open access educational model, lower tuition cost, diverse student composition, and practical training, the community college is often

viewed is a space of offering additional opportunities for those who want or need additional training and retraining and who may not otherwise have access elsewhere (Bailey & Jaggers, 2016; Dougherty, Lahr, & Morest, 2017). Taken together, this data substantiates the critical role that community colleges play in educating and supporting individuals and communities subject to racial oppression and economic subjugation in the U.S.

Minority Serving Institutions

Relevant to the present exploration, is an understanding of the role of Minority Serving Institutions such as the college where this course was developed and implemented. The term "Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs)," is an overarching organizational term that refers to schools with federal designations to serve particular racial and ethnic communities. This includes Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) (Nguyen, Lundy-Wagner, Samagoa, & Gasman, 2015). Notably, while HBCUs and TCUs are designated an MSI by virtue of their articulated mission, other institutions receive such a designation (and its accompanying financial benefits) as a result of enrollment rates of target student demographics. For example, to be a designated Hispanic Serving Institution, a student population must be comprised of at least 25% Hispanic/Latinx students (Nguyen et al, 2015). This is noteworthy since unlike HBCUs which were established specifically for the purpose of educating students of African ancestry (and within a specific historic and political context), HSIs do not share this history or designated mission to specifically serve Latinx students. In addition, schools that have become designated HSIs as their Latinx student population increased, may not have changed their missions or redistributed their resources in order to better serve Latinx students (Garcia et al, 2017).

MSIs play a large role in the education of racialized students in the U.S. as they educate approximately 40% of racially diverse undergraduate students in this country (Garcia et al, 2017; Nguyen et al, 2015). While the majority of research on MSIs focuses on four-year colleges and universities, approximately 22% of community colleges are designated MSIs (Nguyen et al, 2015). This oversight is noteworthy given that two-year MSIs enroll a disproportionately higher number of all racially diverse undergraduate students including "30 percent of Hispanics/Latinos, 26 percent of Pacific Islanders, 22 percent of Asian Americans, 12 percent of American Indians, 10 percent of Blacks/African Americans, and 6 percent of Whites" (Nguyen et al, 2015, p. 3). Research suggests that MSIs, particularly two-year MSIs, serve a critical role in reducing the persistent racial disparities in postsecondary educational success necessary for social mobility (Garcia et al, 2017; Nguyen et al, 2015).

Despite the large number of students enrolled in the community college system and particularly two-year MSIs, its value and utility in the advancement of the community psychology agenda has been overlooked. Reasons for this invisibility are tentative yet some higher education researchers postulate that HSIs are often not the subject of higher education research as they have been racialized and marginalized just as the students they serve are marginalized in society (Garcia et al, 2017). The community college has the potential to be a critical space of education and empowerment in which oppression is disrupted. It is particularly aligned with the aspirations of community psychology such as diversity, social justice, and empowerment. Moreover, given the research suggesting that students from

racially diverse backgrounds seek cultural representation in curriculum and are often drawn to psychology as a means to engage in social intervention (Lott & Rogers, 2011), it is reasonable to conclude that community psychology would be attractive to the diverse student population at a two-year Hispanic Serving Institution. In the following sections, the process of course development and implementation of a community college community psychology class as well as the contextually specific strengths and challenges are presented.

Case Study

Setting: Two-year Hispanic-Serving Institution

The course was developed in 2018 at a designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) community college that is comprised of an ethnically diverse student body in the southwestern region of the U.S. The college is comprised of approximately 34,000 students with 40% identifying as Hispanic/Latinx, 27% White, 15% Asian or Pacific Islander, 9% African American, and 11% international students according to college enrollment data. It is noteworthy that despite the diversity of the student body and the school's designation as an HSI, a recent college diversity indicated that the faculty (full time and part time) remain predominantly white. This contrast presents the complexity of the environment of the institution. That is, the student body reflects a range of diversities and positionalities that are not proportionately reflected within the faculty.

The Course

This course presents the first time the psychology department has offered a community psychology course. It also serves as the only introduction to community psychology for students as community psychology is not required content in the general psychology course. The department consists of six full time faculty members and numerous part-time faculty members. The department has an emphasis on the biological bases of psychology, yet faculty discussions about the subfields of psychology represented in the curriculum generated faculty interest in the inclusion of a community psychology course. Like many institutions, offering a course for the first time requires a rigorous multi-level approval process including: course development at the instructor level, review and approval by the department, review and approval by the college's interdepartmental curriculum committee, and finally, approval by the Academic Senate. Notably, this process took approximately one year to navigate and complete. An overview of the course development and implementation process at a community college is important to understand the distinct strengths and challenges of this particular academic context.

Course Development and Approval

All courses offered within the department are lower level psychology courses. This course was developed as an elective and like many of the department's elective offerings, does not require general psychology as a prerequisite course (although it is advised). While students do not take courses in a prescribed order, there are recommended curricular pathways based upon each student's goals. For example, there are required classes for students who wish to attain the Associate's Degree and specific courses for students who wish to transfer to specific schools or university systems. The course description in the course catalogue reads:

> *"This course provides an overview of prevention science and an introduction to the history, goals, and methods of community psychology. Community psychology focuses on the application of psychological principles to*

understand and address community issues. This course emphasizes the preventive and strength-based approach within community psychology to understand the ecological context of human experiences, initiate action research, and implement social change. Topics such as family and community violence, oppression, criminal justice, and mental health policy are explored. This course requires students to engage in learning outside the classroom in conjunction with various community-based organizations."

The institution's curriculum committee serves as an internal regulating body that ensures compliance with curricular mandates. Given how central transfer credit is to the function of the community college, there is a symbiotic relationship between the presence and content of community psychology courses at four-year undergraduate institutions and its existence and content at community colleges. To this end, the college curriculum committee requires supplemental information about the existence of lower level community psychology courses at local transfer institutions to substantiate its local approval. Because community psychology is not offered at all four-year public and private universities or, it is offered only as an upper level undergraduate course, this course is one of the few departmental electives that is not eligible for transfer credit at many institutions. More specifically, as an elective, it can count toward an Associate's Degree, however, it is not eligible for transfer credit to one of the largest public college systems in the state. This is noteworthy as it may present a barrier to enrollment for some students who seek to transfer to schools that do not offer an undergraduate community psychology course.

Another distinct consideration in the approval of this course at the community college level is how the course prepares students for the workforce. As previously mentioned, one of the primary functions of the community college is to provide vocational and practical work skills for students (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014). Thus, the college curriculum committee also requires the inclusion of current employment and workforce data (see Appendix B). This may be a departure from how community psychology faculty think about classes and their intended outcomes. Inclusion of transfer and employment data was central to the approval process. Remarkably, despite these potential barriers, the course was warmly received and approved by the curriculum committee and the full Academic Senate. Reviewers agreed that this course was aligned with the college mission, fostered positive student-community relations, and introduced students to community-based research. Committee colleagues noted that the course should also be considered for inclusion in the college's public policy program. The most critical feedback was at the departmental level. There are intra-departmental differences about the extent to which the biological bases of human experience should be emphasized as well as differences around using exams as a primary metric of student learning. Because this course emphasizes social and cultural determinants of psychological health and uses qualitative modes of assessment, this course was an opportunity for faculty to discuss these ideological differences. Upon approval of the course, 38 students enrolled in the first offering of the course in spring 2018 despite limitations with transfer credit. This may demonstrate how the content and subject matter resonates with the diverse student population attending this particular community college.

Pedagogy and Instructor Positionalities

Before discussing the content of the course, it is important to acknowledge critical and liberation pedagogies (rooted in the traditions of Freire, Fanon, and Giroux) that undergird the course development process and pedagogical methods employed in this course. Critical and liberation pedagogies maintain that both teaching and learning should be empowering (even liberatory) experiences in which students are agentic beings in the learning process and their academic careers (Freire, 1972). I endeavor to co-create a learning experience in which both students and faculty alike are encouraged to contribute to knowledge production - about self and community.

Professors' identities matter and may be of even greater importance in the contested spaces of academia where even within designated minority serving institutions, there may be a lack of proportionate racial representation on the faculty. In the first class, I talk openly about my own identities as an African American cisgendered heterosexual woman and make visible the diversity that I embody and bring to the subject matter. I recognize that my identities disrupt the hegemony of the discipline of psychology and academia that remains centered in Whiteness. It is from these positions and within the context of a two-year HSI that I developed and teach this course.

Class Experience

Multiple teaching methods were employed including lecture, discussion, community engagement, and integration of small group activities and reflexive practice. As mentioned previously, 38 students enrolled in the course. While student demographic information is not provided to faculty, students discussed their identities in class. Self-reported racial backgrounds and nationalities were comparable to their representation in the student body with the exception of having a disproportionately lower representation of Asian-American students. To encourage students to think about their multiple identities, I begin the semester by talking about my own identities. I also give students a 'quiz' about me during which they are asked a series of questions that require they make assumptions about my background including for example, what neighborhood I live in and how many languages I speak. I use this exercise to invite students to externalize the ways in which we make assumptions about identities and community affiliations. Through my use of self-disclosure and making visible my positionalities, I also model the use of disclosure to foster safe space, begin community building, and begin personalizing the subject matter. Thus, critical pedagogy shaped the class experience and pedagogical methods employed including choice of readings as well as the topics we discussed in class. For example, in one discussion about documented and undocumented immigration, students shared their own personal experiences with undocumented immigration and the myriad emotions they feel given recent legal uncertainty about their protected status. During this discussion, one student shared her own experience as a non-Latinx DACA student and the ways in which her experience is often silenced in broader discussions about legal status. Students were able to think critically about the intersections of power and voice even within marginalized groups.

This discussion was not an isolated incident, rather it became the norm in the class that students personalized the material. Perhaps one of the most powerful class discussions was in response to a nationally publicized hate crime that occurred on one of our satellite campuses. Students verbalized myriad emotions about this event, and applied lessons from class in intersectional

understandings of power and domination and potential community organizing and action.

Another method used in this course was a problem-posing approach in which students worked in dyads and were presented with a question such as: why are so many youth experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles? Students then worked together to define the problem, its impact on wellbeing, and consider potential methods of prevention and intervention applying principles of community psychology. Relatedly, the city's senior advisor on homelessness served as a guest presenter and engaged students in a discussion on factors contributing to youth homelessness in the city. She invited students to problem solve and provide counsel to her as she and elected representatives work on means of prevention and intervention. Students were not only excited that someone in an influential position was presenting in class, they took seriously the opportunity to provide actual feedback to someone actively working and making decisions about the issue of homelessness. In course feedback, one student addressed this by stating:

> *"Everything in that class opened my eyes. I came out that classroom depressed, laughing, happy, smiling, angry, sad. I was feeling everything because it was so powerful and engaging. Especially when we would talk about homelessness and how the United States has the most criminals incarcerated. Those were powerful and interesting to learn about because some the ideas spoken about I never knew and the discussions we would have were good to hear from other people. We gave ideas on how we can help kids with a parent incarcerated and that was a powerful discussion to hear about. Everything we did in that class was amazing."*

Course Content

There are multiple goals to consider regarding content in a community college course including providing the content in the course that will qualify for transfer credit as well as the applied knowledge and skills necessary to meet student workforce preparation needs (Cohen, Brawer, Kisker, 2017). There are also developmental considerations. As previously noted, for some students, this may be their first psychology class. Some students at the present institution, like many community college students, require developmental courses in English and/or Math to increase their preparedness for college level coursework (Bailey & Jaggars, 2016). Thus, choices in the reading level of texts, articles, and other supplemental materials must take these factors into consideration. Second, in a cursory review of available undergraduate community psychology syllabi, much of the content across courses is similar. Many courses are thematically organized around the chapter titles of the most frequently used community psychology textbooks (see for example the sampling of course syllabi available through the Society for Community Research and Action).

In selecting a text as well as supplemental readings for the course, I was keenly aware of the dialectical tension between making visible the erased world knowledges that have contributed to the development and continuation of community and liberation psychologies (Reyes Crux & Sonn, 2011; Sonn, Arcidiacono, Dutta, Kiguwa, Kloos, & Torres, 2017). On the other hand, I attended to the required content codified as the community psychology canon necessary for students to qualify for and receive transfer credit. Remarkably, this scholarship is primarily American, White, and male (Martin-Baro, 1994; Reyes Cruz & Sonn, 2011). Thus, it requires intentionality about how to include dissident or silenced voices in the curriculum

alongside standard content. In weighing these issues, I selected a commonly used textbook (Kloos, Hill, Wandersman, Elias, & Dalton, 2012) and chose to supplement the textbook with select readings and article excerpts to provide students with a more diverse and globally inclusive representation of community psychology scholarship. This included the work of more diverse scholarship from within the U.S., South Africa, Australia, and South America (see Appendix C with course schedule for sample). It is also noteworthy that lectures and videos included excerpts from scholar-activists such as Franz Fanon, Paulo Freire, and Steven Biko. In addition to diverse examples of research, national and local examples of community organizing and action (e.g. Black Lives Matter, environmental activism, prison reform/abolition) were integrated as examples of embodied community psychology values in practice.

Course Assignments

Both formative and summative assessment of learning were intended to evaluate student learning and engage students in personally meaningful ways. Given the diversity of the student population, as well as racial and political concerns on campus during and following the U.S. presidential election, it was imperative that the course not only introduce students to the principles of community psychology, but to also apply them to their lived experiences. There were students in the class who have been formerly incarcerated or have family members who are involved with the criminal justice system, live at or below the poverty level, and have mixed (legal) status families. In valuing the embodied knowledge of students and the communities of which they are a part, I encouraged students to personalize the assignments (and the learning process). As illustration of this approach, select course methods and assignments are discussed below.

PhotoVoice**.** One assignment used early in the semester is a variation of PhotoVoice in which students engage in participatory action learning and are asked to present an image or collage of images with a corresponding brief narrative in response to the question: what defines your experience of community? Despite lack of familiarity with PhotoVoice, many students are able to draw upon personal photonarrative practices to curate life and community experiences through social media. Once students realize the parallels between their lived experiences and community psychology concepts, they are often excited about an assignment that allows them to express themselves artistically. This is noteworthy since many students may not connect methods such as photovoice with psychology.

Community engagement and service-learning**.** Students were required to complete a minimum of 20 hours of community engagement. Prior to the class beginning, I worked with the service-learning coordinator to identify community sites focused on issues of concern to community psychology. The coordinator also worked throughout the semester to ensure that sites complied with minimum criteria established by the college. Students chose to immerse themselves in their own communities including working with: current and emancipated foster youth, formerly incarcerated men, the elderly Black queer community, the transgendered and non-binary community, first generation and mixed status families, and low-income Black and Latinx neighborhoods. One student was also able to engage in research on discrimination facing mental health consumers as part of her service learning with a community-based organization. While students who had extenuating circumstances and were unable to engage in service-learning were given an alternative on-campus community research option, it is notable that no students selected this option.

We integrated students' community engagement experience through ongoing journals and in-class writing reflections. In addition, students presented individually and in groups at the end of the semester about their service-learning experience. A number of students reported learning more about issues facing their communities and learned more about themselves as well. One intended goal of community engagement, from a community college perspective, was to provide students with valuable volunteer work experience while meeting needs within the community. During in-class presentations about their service-learning experiences, many students indicated: 1) that they were continuing to work with the organization beyond the end of the class and; 2) that they were interested in learning more about and working with other organizations in their communities because of their service-learning experience. One student commented in course feedback: "A community is not just where you live. A community is all around us. Whether it is in person or through social media, we can all feel that we belong somewhere. I learned that I have many communities that I belong to and that each member is an essential component of the whole picture."

Community based research. Students gained community-based research experience in addition to the service learning experience. They were required to engage in a semester-long community assessment project in which they applied what was learned in the classroom to an identified community. Specifically, students used community member interviews, naturalistic and participant observations, and public data to learn more about the most pressing issues impacting psychological and community wellbeing of their identified community. Through this semester-long project, students were able to learn about community psychology principles and theory and apply them at their service-learning sites as well as within their community-based research. The project was divided into four different sections throughout the semester to align with class lecture and discussions, facilitate students working on the project in smaller chunks throughout the semester, and to provide feedback throughout the semester prior to submitting the project in its entirety at the end of the semester (See Appendix C).

Students and faculty learned lessons through the multiple methods of instruction and assessment. In the below sections, I reflect on the strengths and challenges of implementing this course.

Lessons Learned: Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

One of the primary benefits of teaching a community psychology course at a community college that is also an HSI is the student population. The students represent a wide range of identities and lived experiences that enrich the learning experience and animate course material. Because it is not a predominantly white university, students typically present with some degree of racial and cultural awareness. The applied nature of course and topical content was timely and aligned with student interests and the political moment in the country (and on campus). We were able to actualize a safe, learning community in which students felt open and free to engage in personal and intellectual discourse as illustrated in the student quotes above. One of the criticisms of community college students is that they are not engaged (Bailey & Jaggars, 2016). These students demonstrated that not only were they engaged in the classroom, they were also engaged in their communities. These were issues that mattered to them. Relatedly, one student commented in a course evaluation:

> *"In the beginning of my college career [here], I felt awkward because all my*

> *instructors were White. However, seeing a person of color as an instructor, I was able to project myself in them. I felt the connection with other students as well. I am happy that I took this course because all the students were required to give back to the community. We all shared a common goal as opposed to just learning and passing exams. Exams are great benchmarks but donating some of our time to different organizations made a difference."*

As this student's comment illustrates, another strength of the course was having a professor who shared or could relate to the racialized identities, cultural backgrounds, and experiences of oppression as the students. As previously noted, professors identities matter. Because of the particular ways in which I give voice to my identities, this gave students the permission and safe space to do the same, which personalized the material.

Another strength was the institutional support for community engagement. The service-learning coordinator was instrumental in identifying and cultivating relationships with community partners. She also ensured that student and community partner needs were met. In addition, she provided an in-class orientation on service-learning that was helpful for students new to service-learning courses. Having this institutional resource was vital to ensure quality student and community partner experience and to track student hours. Ultimately, this reduced the amount of oversight and labor required by the instructor for the service-learning component of the course. While the strengths dominated the experience, there were also distinct challenges.

Challenges

There were also distinct developmental and contextual considerations given the community college HSI setting. First, there are currently no available undergraduate community psychology textbooks available as an open educational resource (OER). The community college system to which the present institution belongs supports open educational resources and zero cost classes. Given the economic constraints of community college students, as a faculty member, I have committed to make all of my classes zero cost when possible. Without the availability of an OER community psychology text, a zero cost designation was not possible for this course. Thus, some students had difficulty accessing the textbook in a timely manner and had to rely upon other students or reserve copies.

A widespread concern for community college students is that of preparedness for collegiate work and the large number of students who require developmental coursework (Bailey & Jaggars, 2016). As this is a writing intensive course, this was particularly challenging for some students. Some students required additional writing support and were therefore referred to campus-based and online writing support resources. Writing intensive courses are often encouraged at the community college level as a method of increasing students' writing skills and preparation for transfer to four-year universities (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2014). Since community colleges are teaching institutions however, faculty teaching loads and class sizes may be barriers to this goal. In short, writing intensive classes can be laborious for community college faculty who have little or no additional support resources such as teaching assistants. For this class, it required several hours or more per writing submission to provide student feedback. Given the extraordinary amount of time involved, this component of the class may need to be revised given the large number of classes and students.

There were also a number of barriers to service-learning. Community college students are also more likely to attend school part-time and need to navigate a host of other life and familial responsibilities that make full-time academic commitment prohibitive (Flynn, James, Mathien, Mitchell, & Whalen, 2017). Accordingly, these life circumstances may serve as potential barriers to service-learning in particular. There were several students who did not complete the service-learning requirement and/or did not complete the class. As most of these students were not responsive to outreach from the instructor, it is not clear the specific factors that impeded course completion. One student experienced a relapse and reported having been in a drug treatment program for the last half of the semester.

This student's experience is related to an aspect of student identity that presents both strengths and unique challenges. Approximately one-third of the class disclosed having a history of mental health challenges. While many community college students may not openly disclose this history, approximately one-half of community college students report current or previous mental health issues and the majority of those do not receive treatment (Eisenberg, Goldrick-Rab, Ketchen Lipson, & Broton, 2016). Rates of mental health challenges reported by community college students is higher than those reported by students at four year universities. Students' openness to disclosing this sensitive information illuminates the multiple ways in which students felt safe within the context of this course. It may also reveal the few spaces in which students are able to publicly voice mental health struggles. Within class discussions, some students stated that this was the first time they talked about their mental health in a classroom. One student shared that it was 'refreshing' to be able to be open in talking about how personal the material was to her own experience growing up in foster care. Other students also wrote about personal and family mental health struggles in their journals. With this background, we were able to personalize discussions about evolutions in community mental health, the power of the mental health consumer and recovery model, and stigma and discrimination facing individuals with mental health concerns. While some students were able to speak openly about some of their personal challenges, these same concerns at times presented barriers to assignment completion, class attendance, and methods of communicating.

Conclusion

The future of community psychology education would benefit from prioritizing undergraduate education. Given the large percentage of undergraduate students enrolled in community colleges, particularly African American and Latinx students, it is clear that the community college can serve as a primary avenue to introduce community psychology early in students' academic careers. Community colleges have distinct challenges including limited time with students given the increased number of students with part time status. In addition, it is important for faculty to be mindful of developmental considerations and the additional support that some students may need to fulfill course objectives, such as writing assistance. To this end, community colleges often have modest resources to support community psychology faculty. The development of research and writing collectives or other methods of collaborative work models may help support faculty and prevent individual community psychologists from working in isolation. One recommendation is the establishment of a community psychology community of practice that includes national and international community college faculty. Such a community of practice would benefit from having a specific section devoted to those working within Minority Serving Institutions.

An important consideration emerged during course development and implementation around the use of community engagement and service-learning. Service-learning has long been identified as a method to advance the goals of community psychology, particularly attitudes around civic engagement and social responsibility, respect for diversity, consciousness raising, and ability to perspective take, and even increase student confidence (Henderson, 2017; Reeb, 2010). Service-learning can also be particularly beneficial in the community college in terms of achievement of learning outcomes, critical thinking, and an enhanced sense of personal and civic responsibility (Prentice & Robinson, 2010). Despite these data, a number of students in the current course encountered difficulties in balancing the time requirements with other life commitments. While the majority of students who completed their service-learning hours reported positive learning experiences and some stayed at their sites for longer time, others were unable to meet the requirements or may have dropped the class because of it. Further reflection on the demands of community engagement for adult learners with jobs, families, and other life commitments is warranted.

Another lesson learned is that curricular decisions should be interrogated. Community psychology scholarship emerging from South Africa and South America appeared to resonate with this specific student population possibly because of similar demographic backgrounds of students and current cultural and political issues in the U.S. Inclusion of scholarship from outside of the U.S. may also foster more globally minded community psychology students (Jimenez, Sanchez, McMahon, & Viola, 2016). Consideration of transfer and workforce preparation is a distinct consideration for faculty at two-year MSIs even as we attempt to create a more inclusive curriculum. Given the disturbingly low transfer rates for African American and Latinx students in particular (CCRC, n.d.), removing barriers to transfer and increasing access to the course and discipline fosters equity and is arguably a measure of justice. This same process may also inadvertently perpetuate the practice of disciplinary hegemony. Through the very practice of regulating that particular content be included, or particular methods of assessment and evaluation be employed, we run the risk of institutionalizing the erasure of traditionally marginalized and excluded scholarship in favor of what has been defined as the canon of community psychology. In this way, the process of reviewing and approving curriculum may become not only a pedagogical or curricular process, but also a moral and ethical dilemma. Such a process illuminates the importance and potential power of curriculum committees which is often minimized. Indeed, faculty and curriculum committee members have the opportunity to engage in "epistemological resistance" (Santos, 2017) to invite, challenge, or even necessitate the inclusion of marginalized scholarship across coursework. For example, this could include the requirement that faculty make note of the diversity across identities of the authors of any texts or selected readings. This should also include diversity of research samples and populations studied including non-American research contexts. For faculty at MSIs, this may include a requirement that curriculum reflect the cultural demographics of the student population. This diversity should move beyond mere racial integration, however, to include diverse ideological perspectives from which community psychology is taken up. This same diversity should be reflected in videos, images, and subject matter in the classroom. Because curriculum committees have the authority to require changes, they may have the ability to serve as gatekeepers to decolonizing curriculum.

As mentioned previously, there is a need for more open access textbooks in community psychology which is of particular importance for low-income students and lower resource institutional settings. There is also a need for more intentional and systematic ways of centering community knowledge in community psychology instead of sole reliance on knowledges emerging from academia. As Carolissen and colleagues (2017) describe, exclusion of non-Western ecologies of knowledge is a perpetuation of cognitive injustice. Thus, representative and inclusive knowledge ecologies are part of the "decolonial turn in community psychology" (p. 497).

Perhaps one of the most important lessons garnered from the development and implementation of a community psychology course at a community college is the reminder that as educators, we are also tasked with preparing students for employment. We seldom consider that service-learning and fieldwork requirements may facilitate the attainment of work experience for students. Thus, we must be aware of how to translate the science of community psychology in concrete ways that may be beneficial for students who work in an array of sectors. It may be advantageous for faculty to contextualize research, critical thinking, and analytical skills as job skills that may be beneficial to employment within psychology (e.g. community mental health, community organizing) as well as outside of the field (e.g. education, law, sales). Importantly, students learn important knowledge and skills that increase their abilities as engaged community members.

Future Directions: Community based research lab

While there were many lessons learned in the development and implementation of this course, there are many opportunities to continue to advance this work. First, further assessment of learning and outcomes is warranted, particularly with attention to equity outcomes. It is important for faculty to review and consider data showing us who completed our courses and any differences across student groups in learning outcomes. This course has only been offered one time. Student feedback as well as learning outcomes must be considered and integrated into future versions of this course. Consideration of ways to introduce community psychology outside of the classroom and to non-psychology majors is also important. The present instructor developed a community-based research lab specifically for students enrolled in the college's African American and Latinx student programs. The purpose of the Community, Liberation, and African-centered Psychology (CLAP-back) lab, is to offer students an opportunity to: a) gain valuable community-based research experience; b) contribute to their own communities; and c) gain research, academic, and professional skills that may increase their competitiveness for admission to four-year universities. We look forward to implementing this next aspect of community psychology at the college. This will be the first time a community-based research lab is offered through the department and through the African American and Latinx student programs. Ultimately, the community college, including two-year MSIs, serves as a ripe opportunity to introduce community psychology to the millions of students enrolled in these important educational settings. This presents an opportunity for community psychology to more fully embody its values and move toward a more inclusive and decolonized curriculum. Community psychology courses can also produce tangible skills that can be helpful for them and their communities. In this way, community psychology has the potential to move beyond theory to resonate more loudly with a wider more diverse student base.

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Appendix A

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the theory, historical foundations, and methods of community psychology.
2. Differentiate Community Psychology from other sub-disciplines of psychology.
3. Demonstrate familiarity with the empirical basis for prevention science, health promotion, and community psychology in preventing and responding to community issues.
4. Demonstrate critical understanding of the factors shaping contexts that promote health and psychological well-being of individuals and communities.
5. Demonstrate critical thinking through collaboration with community partners in identifying, designing, implementing, and interpreting community based research.
6. Students will determine how psychologists can use psychological science and principles for the betterment of a community.

Appendix B

Course Rationale

Community psychologists work with groups and communities to promote the health and well-being of communities, build resilience and foster empowerment of a community as a whole. They focus on issues of social concern and use research and evaluation tools to advocate for social justice and redress social inequities. Community psychologists work with community members and stakeholders such as: non-profit organizations, social service providers, school administration and staff, health services professionals, law enforcement personnel, and private employers. Community psychologists may also work within the community mental health system to prevent and provide effective treatment of chronic mental health conditions including drug and alcohol addiction. Ultimately, community psychologists utilize multiple strategies to engender optimal community functioning.

Currently, the SMC Department of Psychology does not offer a Community Psychology course. Community psychology is an emerging area of psychology ripe with opportunity. There are an increased number of community psychology and interdisciplinary degrees being offered at the undergraduate and graduate levels. A community psychology course would provide the theoretical and scientific foundation for not only students interested in pursuing further studies in community psychology, but also in areas such as public health and social work. As previously stated, community psychology has as part of its core values and praxis, community engagement and advocacy for social change. This class may also be of particular interest and benefit to students interested in community activism and organization.

In addition to the academic benefits, training in community psychology has employment benefits. Recent workforce data indicate that between 2014 and 2024, employment opportunities in psychology are expected to rise by 19% (BLS, 2016). The American Psychological Association (APA) has identified a few areas of increased employment opportunities relevant to community psychology. Specifically, the APA (2008) notes that there is an increased need in the areas of program evaluation and multidisciplinary collaborations. In addition, there remains continued demand for professionals across degree levels in community mental health, substance abuse, and consulting. As these are areas of community psychology in which students receive specialized training, they will be uniquely qualified to take advantage of these emerging opportunities.

Appendix C

Class	Class Topic	Reading
UNIT 1: ORIGINS AND FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY		
1	Introductions Course Overview	
2	What is community psychology?	Ch. 1
3	History of community psychology continued ***Service learning orientation**	Ch. 2
4	Foundational Principles	
UNIT 2: DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY		
5	Understanding community	Ch. 6 **DUE: PhotoVoice Assignment**
6	Ecological Framework: Individuals and Environments	Ch. 5 Service learning paperwork due
UNIT 3: COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH		
7	Community Based Research	Ch. 3
8	Community Based Research- Exemplars	Ch. 4 **DUE: COMMUNITY MEMBER INTERVIEW**
UNIT 3: DIVERSITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, & WELLNESS		
9	Social capital and social networks Individuals and Place: LA Neighborhoods	Ch. 5 +podcast: There Goes the Neighborhood
10	Diversity, Social Justice, & Wellness	Ch. 7
11	Applying CP: Racialized Violence	Excerpt: Fanon, (1963); Richardson, L.S. (2015) Start service learning **DUE: NEIGHBORHOOD OR BEHAVIORAL/SETTING ANALYSIS**
12	Applying CP: Gendered Violence	Clifford et al (2017) Recommend: Serrata et al (2017)
UNIT 4: COPING, TREATMENT, AND PREVENTION		
13	Stress, Coping, and Resilience	Ch. 8
14	Community Mental Health	Excerpt: Nelson, Kloos, & Ornelas (2014)
15	Prevention	Ch. 9 **DUE: SECTION 3 OF COMM ASSMT PROJECT**
16	Prevention and Promotion- Programs	Ch. 10
UNIT 5: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES		

17	Community and Social Change	Ch. 11
18	Empowerment and Citizen Participation Community activism and coalition building	Ch. 12
19	Applying CP: Criminal Justice Issues	Duckett & Serinkel (2008) Excerpt: Alexander, M. (2010)
20	Program Development and Evaluation	Ch. 13
21	Homelessness Prevention and Programming	Excerpt: Nelson, Kloos, & Ornelas (2014) Begin creating closure with community partner **DUE: SECTION 4 COMM ASSMT PROJECT**
UNIT 6: FUTURE DIRECTIONS		
22	Future Directions: CP and global liberation psychologies	Excerpt: Martin-Baro (1996); Sonn et al, (2017)
23	SL presentations	
24	SL presentations	
	Final Community Assessment Project Due	

Supplemental Class Readings

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