LDR810 Cross-Cultural Dynamics

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Professor

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Assignment #3 – Essay

1. Write a 5-page essay based on one (1) of the three (3) items below:

a. Write a paper highlighting a cross-cultural experience that involved a project or work-related activity to which you could have applied Community Development principles. Discuss principles you violated and principles you used. Give a synopsis of, now being aware of the principles, you could have proceeded for a positive outcome.

b. Develop a project plan related to your work that will focus on a cross-cultural strategy and enumerate practical applications of the Community Development principles.

c. Choose a factual event in a cross-cultural setting from books, media, or personal knowledge that was development-focused and critique it through the grid of the 10 principles.

2. Paper Outline

a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.

b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.

c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis.

d. Use a minimum of eleven scholarly research sources (two books and the remaining scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles).

# Factors of a Cross-Cultural Plan Toward Community Development

This student’s LDR810 Cross-Cultural Dynamics research identified three main areas that, when developed, improve cultural sensitivity. In brief, they are cross-cultural communication, cross-cultural understanding, and community development. Since OGS provides andragological teaching that contextualizes students’ learning toward their ministry calling, this researcher will focus on applying cross-cultural factors within spiritual discipleship groups. LDR810 is timely as this researcher’s prospectus is currently being written.

Regarding Cross-Cultural (CC) communication, three subcategories from research lead to greater Cultural Intelligence (CQ): listening skills, language skills, and teaching skills. Listening skills build empathy by better recognizing the emotions and feelings of the speaker (Alford, 2021, p. 37; Ang & Dyne, 2008). Active listening also shows engagement and concern for the person sharing (Bushey, 2023; Alford, 2021, p. 37; p. 2380; Manley et al., 2019). Language skills include understanding a shared language (Ang & Dyne, 2008, p. xii), or lexicon, by regularly meeting and talking with one another. Language skills also include asking good questions (Chipulu et al., 2016, p.2) that move conversation forward and provide relational engagement. Lastly, Teachers who share mutually valuable concepts can enhance CC communication and build community. Namely, CC teachers should permit silence and “wait time” while encouraging group discussion and reflection (Alford, 2021, p. 37). Conversely, teachers should not approach the culturally diverse classroom or small group with a “lecture” mindset, which could promote top-down thinking with minimal connection (Alford, 2021, p. 37).

Regarding CC understanding, four themes arose from the research: sharing stories (Pipas & Pepper, 2021, p. 26), recognizing personal value (Frunza, 2023, p. 81), how our thinking affects our being (Pipas and Pepper, 2021, p. 25), and lastly, understanding the “why” (Pipas & Pepper, 2021, p. 25). Firstly, sharing stories has been found to build understanding within a community, creating a context for cultural distinctiveness (Pipas & Pepper, 2021). Secondly, by promoting how group members value others, they are more likely to be sensitive to their wants and needs (Frunza, 2023). Thirdly, understanding how people’s belief systems impact their lives makes them less likely to be judgmental towards differences perceived as weaknesses (Pipas & Pepper, 2021). Lastly, when the “why” behind people’s actions is understood, group members will be more likely to respond compassionately and modify their actions to support rather than tear down others (Pipas & Pepper, 2021).

Ultimately, this researcher’s doctoral work aims to create discipleship communities that heal. Healthy, grace-based communities grow and heal their members and become a healing source to those outside of their group. Realistically, these groups will be diverse, comprised of young and older men and women with diverse cultural backgrounds and even Christian faith perspectives. As such, understanding CC dynamics is essential. Developing a culturally sensitive community will require intentionality. Research indicates that healthy communities can mitigate loneliness, anxiety, and fear (Bushey, 2023, p. 2388). All Christians are members of one body (NASB, 2020, 1 Corinthians 12:12); therefore, it shouldn’t be a surprise that disunity can cause anxiety and loneliness. While researching CC communities, two themes arose: creating group partnership opportunities and communities of care by replacing “us vs. them” mentalities (Pipas & Pepper, 2021, p. 25).

# Implementing Cross-Cultural Principals Toward Community Development

Considering the factors above, an outline arose to facilitate training toward a culturally friendly community. This researcher believes teaching the following six topics can nurture a culturally diverse and sensitive community. The final goal is to develop a community that empowers its members to love and accept others from diverse backgrounds, all the while healing and growing themselves. The six topics, in order, are: Identity in Christ, Feelings and beliefs, Empathic Listening & sharing your testimony, Prayer, Forgiveness, and Biblical Leadership and Discipleship.

Teaching identity in Christ will support multiple CC factors. In fact, this teaching may have the most profound influence on CC receptivity as it enforces the value of mankind through the Biblical lens of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. As people begin to see themselves as members of God’s story; race, sex, creed, and doctrinal background diminish in light of God’s abounding love and grace for all humankind. Cross-culturally sensitive communities recognize people’s value (Frunza, 2023, p.82), and what better way to see value than by studying the creator and His creation? Considering the Thomas Theorem, “the idea that what we believe becomes our reality” (Pipas & Pepper, 2021, p. 25), teaching on the dignity and function of man establishes a shared Biblical worldview in which group members can view one another in love and divine purpose. A common problem with community groups is the “us vs. them” mindset, which can cause division (Pipas & Pepper, 2021, p. 26). Teaching a Biblical worldview mitigates this fractional mindset and instead builds community within the body of Christ by teaching each member has their proper place (NASB, 2020, 1 Peter 4:10-11; Pfeiffer et al., 2023, p. 2).

The next topic focuses on the relationship between feelings and beliefs. Once a Biblical worldview has been established, teaching how feelings and beliefs trigger and reinforce each other will help group members understand the “why’ behind common reactions and overreactions. Pipas and Pepper (2021) note that as Christians tap into each other’s stories and their “why” it builds empathy (p. 25). Empathy development is critical for culturally diverse groups (Jiang and Wang, 2018, p. 1664). Furthermore, understanding our thought processes and reactiveness helps Christians respond in love rather than react in judgment.

Closely linked to feelings and beliefs, which build empathy, is teaching specifically on empathic listening. Bushey (2023) noted that “the act of listening to others and recognizing their emotions increases empathy toward another individual and unities communities” (p. 2389). She specifically notes that listening to oral histories and sharing stories is an intentional way to grow a sense of belonging (p. 2388). As such, this researcher’s discipleship groups will include teaching on empathic listening as well as how to share your testimony with others.

Prayer is a critical spiritual discipline for Christians and promotes “deeper psychospiritual healing” (Wilder et al., 2020, p. 49). Furthermore, prayer develops community by promoting shared values and spending quality time together. Culturally, prayer allows community members to hear each other’s hearts and partake in the same values, struggles, and concerns that others have. While teaching on prayer, this researcher intends to cover the basics of prayer, how God speaks to His children, and how believers can incorporate prayer into their personal and group lives. Ultimately, the desire is to increase the interest and usage of prayer to develop a greater sensitivity to the Holy Spirit’s leading. As this occurs, the group can expect greater receptivity to the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which include unity and love. (NASB, 2020, Galatians 5:22-26, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Acts 4:32, Galatians 3:28).

There is a tendency for offense whenever you intermingle people with different perspectives and backgrounds. Forgiveness toward reconciliation is the Biblical solution to those offenses (Winter, 1999, p. 441) and, therefore, must be taught in cross-cultural contexts. Forgiveness is not a new concept to Christians. The Christian faith is built on repentance and forgiveness. That is why Jesus gave the parable in Matthew 18, indicating that Christians must forgive as much as necessary. Whether dealing with personal or communal relationships, understanding Biblical forgiveness is a must. Since Christians routinely carry bitterness, resentment, and anger, group members must first be reconciled to God by receiving His forgiveness (NASB, 2020, 2 Corinthians 5:20). Once they have received forgiveness for themselves, they are more likely to forgive others. Forgiving must become a lifestyle that perpetually removes any divides in relationships and works toward reconciliation.

Lastly, this researcher’s spiritual discipleship group will teach leadership and discipleship from a Kingdom mindset. Most Christians are familiar with the Great Commission (NASB, 2020, Matthew 28:16-20); however, generally, it is linked to overseas missions. While the Great Commission is cross-cultural, Americans frequently forget that mission work begins in their home! To build a cross-cultural community, this researcher intends to teach the Biblical Kingdom as Jesus presented it, coupled with a transformational leadership methodology (Manley et al., 2019). Starting with our personal sanctification journey and moving outward, Christians have a job to do (NASB, 2020, Romans 12:2, 1 Peter 4:10)! First, Christians need to be discipled and heal, then they can take this “good news,” their testimony, to others (NASB, 2020, Luke 2:8-11, Romans 10:15, Acts 14:21-22). Discipleship is closely linked with leadership as it requires influencing others with a message. In the Christian’s case, it is the Gospel message. Frequently, the Gospel is transmitted more through lifestyle than words, but ideally, these are synchronized. Spiritual discipleship groups that teach every believer’s priesthood and the Great Commission can build a Biblical mindset that treasures all nations and people groups (NASB, 2020, 1 Peter 2:5,9; Beswick & McNiell, 1951, p. 2). To the extent that Christians can receive Christ’s love for themselves, they can love (have the best interests in mind) of those around them (NASB, 2020, John 13:34-35).

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