

1151

## **Social Justice & Transformation through Multi-cultural Service Learning**

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To meet the growing, complex needs of our society today and increasing demands for program accountability, future professionals need the skills, cultural competence and interest to work in diverse communities. Multicultural service learning promotes the strength and value of cultural diversity and focuses on equitable distribution of power among racial and ethnic groups, as well as between those providing service and those served. This pedagogy addresses social issues and community needs, emphasizing reflection, equality, and mutual reciprocity, and empowerment. It focuses on social justice and is grounded in a socially constructed reality that is mutually created in collaboration with community experts.

After a brief introduction to multi-cultural service learning, workshop leader will provide the context for this pedagogy by profiling community-based organizations (CBOs) that serve vulnerable populations and have opened their doors to occupational therapy students. She will outline the steps to understanding CBOs' assets and needs to develop an evidenced-based, occupation-focused program with the agency and to improve occupational performance and encourage participation and engagement in life of those they serve. She will reveal how students explore cultural competence, inequalities that create unjust and oppressive conditions, reflect on the role of social and occupational injustices and participate in a capstone advocacy trip to Washington, DC to lobby for policy changes to benefit those they serve.

By end of the workshop, participants will be able to articulate:

- a) Purpose of multi-cultural service learning and its social justice, transformative perspective in preparing students for working with underserved and vulnerable populations
  
- b) How to incorporate structured applied research methods (CBPR) into multicultural service learning experiences to develop the skills of a practice scholar and for transformative learning
  
- c) Student learning activities that contribute to sustaining and funding the program initiatives through outcome studies, program evaluation and grant writing
  
- d) An action plan for initiating this process within their educational setting and/or local community.

Length required: 1.5 hours or half-day pre-conference workshop

Teaching methods: mini-lectures interspersed with small group and large group discussions, personal and small group reflections and action planning.

Maximum participants: 24.