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Resource Paper

# Theorizing a Sustainable-Holistic-Interconnected-Partnership Development Model with Feminist, Activist Lenses: Best Practices from a Community-University Service-Learning Partnership in Asian American Studies

Jennifer A. Yee and Ashley E. Cheri

Abstract

Mindfully engaging with one another on collaborative projects and relationship building is critical for sustaining partnerships of trust and reciprocity between community-based organizations (CBOs) and institutions of higher education. This resource paper presents the Sustainable-Holistic-Interconnected-Partnership (SHIP) Development Model based on a study theorizing the organizational evolution of the ten-year community-university service-learning partnership between the Youth Education Program of the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance and the Asian American Studies Program at California State University, Fullerton. The authors conducted a self-study intersecting their lenses as feminist activists of color and their use of qualitative methods. They found that they sustained their partnership by intentionally grounding their norms and practice in the values of democracy, equity, social justice, and liberation. The SHIP model has diverse implications for community-university partnerships and the fields of Asian American studies (AAS) and service learning.

Introduction

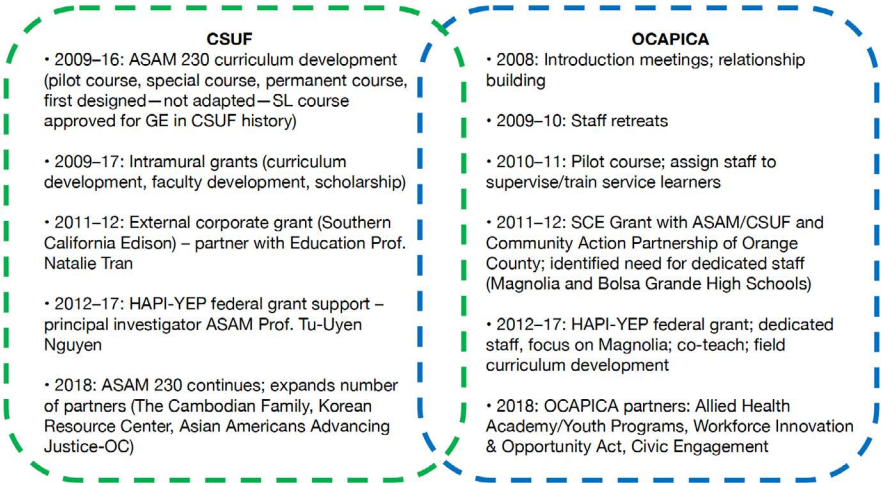
What makes a community-university partnership work? How and why does a partnership survive and thrive? This resource paper

answers these questions by theorizing an organizational development model based on a ten-year community-university partnership. Addressing these questions is critical for community-based organizations (CBOs) and institutions of higher education intent on long-term collaboration. We hope this model stimulates conversations about developing partnerships with a foundation of values and intentionality.

In 2008, we at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) and the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA) tentatively agreed to design a service-learning course to support OCAPICA’s capacity to serve community youth. We did not know then that we were embarking on such a lengthy partnership. This diagram summarizes the respective and collective organizational efforts between CSUF’s Asian American Studies (ASAM) Program and OCAPICA’s Youth Education Program to build our partnership infrastructure (see Figure 1).

Our resource paper draws its information from the aspect of the partnership consisting of ASAM faculty member Jennifer Yee co-creating the service-learning course, ASAM 230, Civic Engagement Through Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Studies, with multiple OCAPICA staff members including Ashley Cheri. ASAM 230 is a lower-division course that gives students the opportunity to reflect

Figure 1. ASAM-CSUF and OCAPICA Partnership Development Timeline



on their life mission relative to the mission of Asian American studies while also serving in a structured field curriculum with a CBO. OCAPICA staff have served as co-instructors, field supervisors, and field curriculum developers. In the fall of 2016, ASAM 230 became the first service-learning course (designed, not adapted) in CSUF's history to earn General Education status. ASAM 230 alumni have taken professional positions with OCAPICA and, in turn, instructed, mentored, and supervised ASAM 230 students. Since 2014, ASAM faculty, OCAPICA staff, and students have presented on the course and this partnership at conferences on service learning and AAS. Conference attendees frequently asked how we sustained our partnership. In 2018, ASAM and OCAPICA partners mutually agreed to pause the service-learning partnership due to OCAPICA's shifting capacity. Yee continues to develop new community-university partnerships and teach ASAM 230.

In this resource paper, we focus on a primary finding of a self-study conducted from 2014 to 2017. Our SHIP model attempts to capture parallel, intersecting processes contributing to our longevity (see

Figure 2. Sustainable-Holistic-Interconnected-Partnership Model



Figure 2). First, we share the model's origins. Then, we explain the model with exemplars illustrating each process. We analyze how and why each aspect of the model reflects our partnership and manifests our values. We conclude with a discussion of limitations, implications, and recommendations. Those wishing to use the model may refer to Table 1 in the appendix for further understanding, application, and theory building.

### Methodology and Theoretical Approaches

The SHIP model developed from a scholarly self-study of the evolution of our partnership. We created the visual because words could not fully depict our collaboration's dynamic. Our study blended qualitative methodologies and intentional theoretical frameworks. Our standpoints as feminist activists of color informed our partnership development and theorizing (Bunch, 2005; Harding, 1992; hooks, 1991). By engaging in a grounded-theory approach to knowledge production, we conceptualized a model of partnership development that emerged from our data and analysis (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). As well, the principles of action research (Stringer, 2007), political action research (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998, 225), and participatory action research (Berg, 2004; Kemmis and Wilkinson, 1998; Stringer, 2007) enabled us to actualize our values while conducting the study.

Initially embarking on a case study in 2014 (Creswell, 2014), we gathered information and documents, which we organized into a comprehensive, multiyear timeline summarizing our efforts. Referring to this foundational data, we then conducted phenomenological interviews (Creswell, 2014) of each other with these protocol questions: What did we do specifically, both as individuals and as organizations? How did we do it? What is the nature of our working together? How did we grow and evolve, individually and together? Why has our collaboration lasted? Why do we like working together so much? What makes us "click"?

The questions evolved as we pushed ourselves to move beyond reporting descriptive data to analysis and meaning making. We asked: What patterns do we see in our partnership experiences and durability that could be of use to others? Why do these patterns matter? From our analysis and meaning making, we theorized that both an externally visible action-oriented process—coupled with the unseen internal consciousness of selves and interpersonal relationships—contributed to our sustainable, mutually beneficial community-university service-learning partnership.

Key to our partnership's sustainability and theorizing is our mindful practice as evolving feminist activists of color. (Ashley identifies as a Fijian, Creole, American born in New Orleans, Louisiana and raised in Los Alamitos, California. Jennifer identifies as a second-generation Chinese American, youngest of seven children, born and raised in Compton then Cerritos, California. Each of us has immigrant parents.) We are highly aware of institutionalized structures that seek to devalue humanity, maintain silence, reproduce oppressions, and perpetrate violence under the guise of normalizing hierarchical, racialized, patriarchal academic and organizational culture (Berry and Mizelle, 2006; Brooks and Witherspoon-Arnold, 2013; Law, Phillips, and Turney, 2004; Nicol and Yee, 2019). Consequently, we strive to engage in liberatory practice by establishing partnership norms and values of democracy, equity, social justice, and radical care.

Feminist theorists explain best our decision to move from building a case study to generating theory. According to feminist scholar and activist Charlotte Bunch, "[T]he purpose of theory ... is not to provide a pat set of answers about what to do, but to guide us in sorting out options.... Theory thus both grows out of and guides activism in a continuous, spiraling process" (2005, 13). In our work, we strive for social change. While case studies no doubt offer useful description, we felt that articulating how and why our partnership is sustainable and mutually beneficial could help others to resist replicating persistent systemic inequalities. Over the past decade, we learned that community-university partnerships may decline or fail due to inconsistent communication, unclarified assumptions about partners' capacity, roles, and intent, and lack of understanding what constitutes healthy "partnership" development. Equally challenging for partnerships advancing social justice through coalition building is establishing a commitment to shared norms and values that counter hierarchical politics by transparently acknowledging each partner's motivation, power, and positionality. Even partners aiming to achieve shared goals of peace, justice, empowerment, and liberation may find themselves reproducing hierarchies and abusing their power when collaborating interorganizationally. For example, when university faculty send students to CBOs to complete service hours for class without communicating or creating a relationship with the CBO, faculty are assuming that CBOs need their students' service and expecting, without consultation, that CBO staff have the capacity to support and mentor students. We believe theorizing from our partnership has implications for all types of values-driven partnerships.

In addition, our study employed specific types of action research to address these lessons. Action research is a process of inquiry “enacted ... with an explicit set of social values” with these characteristics:

- It is *democratic*, enabling participation of all people
- It is *equitable*, acknowledging people’s equality of worth
- It is *liberating*, providing freedom from oppressive, debilitating conditions
- It is *life enhancing*, enabling the expression of people’s full human potential (Stringer, 2007, 11)

Action research is also “a collaborative approach to research that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems. This approach endorses consensual, democratic, and participatory strategies to encourage people to examine reflectively ... issues affecting them or their community” (Berg, 2004, 197). Our partnership data revealed that we had infused action research values throughout our practice.

The principles of political action research “to work for social change with regard to issues of power” (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998, 225) prompted us to examine how we made decisions and exercised power. Likewise, the practice of participatory action research to engage in a “spiral of self-reflective cycles” (Kemmis and Wilkinson, 1998, 21) consisting of “planning a change, acting and observing the processes and consequences of the change, reflecting on these processes and consequences, and re-planning” influenced how we developed our partnership’s organizational culture and how we conducted our study (Berg, 2004; Kemmis and Wilkinson, 1998; Stringer, 2007). In sum, we have engaged in both feminist theoretical development and action research to liberate our notions of what research is in order to imagine, conceptualize, and share what a partnership can be.

### The SHIP Development Model of Community-University Partnership Development

The purpose of the SHIP model (see Figure 2 and Table 1) is to guide potential community and university partners through their partnership development while actualizing foundational values of democracy, equity, social justice, and liberation. The SHIP model is:

- **Sustainable:** shows how the parallel, intersectional processes of action and relationship building may lead

to an ongoing collaborative culture that both deepens and strengthens over time;

- **Holistic:** views the visible and unseen aspects of partnership development as a system comprised of related parts;
- **Interconnected:** relies on each participant's strengths, honesty, care, and integrity to become reciprocal and mutually beneficial; and a
- **Partnership:** evolves from a working relationship to a "partnership."

Figure 2 consists of two concentric circles depicting the working relationship, that is, the outer Ring of Action and the inner Relational Ring, with a goal of transitioning from a relationship to a "Partnership" at its core. Bringle and Clayton suggest using "the term *relationship* as a general and broad term to refer to all types of interactions between persons and *partnership* to refer to relationships in which the interactions possess three particular qualities: closeness, equity, and integrity" (2013, 542). The Ring of Action portrays "visible" tasks completed in a somewhat linear fashion, characterized by a more formal, transactional relationship (Bringle, Clayton, and Price, 2009). The Relational Ring activities are usually unseen, social interactions and conversations that deepen the relationship. When cultivated over time, the Relational Ring has the potential to shift the relationship into the Partnership Core, which represents trust, care, and a reciprocal practice of communication and shared decision making that manifest Bringle and Clayton's (2013) closeness, equity, and integrity. Collaborators can complete the Ring of Action tasks without deepening the relationship (Relational Ring) or developing a partnership (Partnership Core). Table 1 in the appendix offers detailed explanations to support the application of Figure 2.

Here, we present exemplars from our partnership history to illustrate how the Ring of Action and Relational Ring work. Each step contributed to our partnership's development and sustainability. Our fundamental assumption of acting with reciprocity and mutual understanding established the trust at our partnership core.

The Ring of Action (RA) and Relational Ring (RR): Establishing the Class and Building CBO Capacity

### 1. Identify Assets/Needs (RA); Introduction/Build Trust (RR).

Forming the partnership foundation requires investing time and



attention. For three years (2008-11), Jennifer Yee and OCAPICA staff members including Ashley Cheri collaborated to establish ASAM 230 as a course within CSUF's curriculum and to build OCAPICA's capacity to supervise twenty-five college student service-learners per semester. In 2008, a partnership development grant from CSUF's Center for Internships & Community Engagement (CICE) supported meetings where we discussed motivations, assets, and needs, and ultimately built trust. For example, OCAPICA staff shared nuanced knowledge of community norms, networks with local high schools and decision makers, and expertise building relationships with families entrusting their teens to attend OCAPICA's afterschool programs. Yee shared her access to university resources (i.e., the Asian American Studies Program, CICE, and intramural grant programs) and her expertise with critical pedagogy, curricular design, and mentoring. At the time, OCAPICA staff stated their Youth Education Programs would benefit from a consistent set of college mentors/tutors. Yee identified ASAM's and CSUF's need to educate students with consciousness, cultural competence, and a commitment to civic engagement. Together, we created a synergistic solution by agreeing to develop a class through which students would learn about the mission of AAS while serving as mentors and tutors with OCAPICA's Youth Education programs.

## **2. Identify/Seek Resources (RA); Establish Norms/Clarify Expectations (RR).**

Determining if you have enough money, time, and people to do the work is key to partnership longevity. Embarking on this project at the onset of the 2008-9 Great Recession meant no budgets to support our budding collaboration. OCAPICA staff duties increased as many CBOs experienced funding and staff reductions. The California State University instituted a system-wide 10 percent salary-reduction furlough to prevent layoffs. The economic climate compelled us to be frank. We clarified expectations and agreed to invest time beyond our compensated responsibilities to continue developing our ideas. OCAPICA discontinued its on-site afterschool program, and Cheri facilitated a shift to a school-based model. Yee investigated the curriculum proposal and approval process. Owning our frustrations, challenges, and limitations fostered our trust and commitment to honesty and well-being.

## **3. Plan of Action (RA); Formalize Relationship/Mentoring (RR).**

Moving forward requires creating and implementing plans while

strengthening ties. Because of the economic uncertainty, we could only plan ahead by semester or half-year. Yee learned that establishing a special course required approval of the ASAM Program, the College Curriculum Committee, and College Dean. From spring to summer 2009, she drafted the syllabus to submit in the fall of 2009 for approval to offer the class for the first time in the fall of 2010. Uncertain about organizational staffing and capacity to supervise so many students, OCAPICA colleagues created a plan in 2009 to assign service learners to three sites. Our parallel development required mentoring one another on the protocols, cultural norms, and communication styles of our respective organizations.

#### **4. Pilot (RA); Practice the Relationship (RR).**

Starting by piloting is a great way to learn what works. OCAPICA staff suggested piloting our new service-learning collaboration with interns. Yee asked four former students interested in educational careers to enroll in her fall 2009 academic internship course. Each student served at one of the three OCAPICA afterschool mentoring program sites. OCAPICA staff and Yee “practiced” our relationship through weekly check-ins by phone, e-mail, and face-to-face meetings. Students provided biweekly reflections and evaluations on their internship experiences, field supervisors, and proposed course texts. This first pilot proved to become an invaluable part of our partnership development process and eventually, our partnership culture.

#### **5. Reflect/Assess Pilot/Revise Plan (RA); Reflect and Change (RR).**

Lessons from the pilot will inform and steer efforts to improve and change. OCAPICA staff learned early that supervisors and interns needed site coordination and communication. They also learned that supervisors grappling with increased workloads due to budget cuts found it difficult to offer students meaningful tasks. Yee learned that students enjoyed being of service and wished for time together to share and make sense of their service. Their feedback on potential texts guided her modification of readings on the draft syllabus. She also discovered that coordinating the pilot and interns, which constituted a small course in addition to her full teaching load of four classes (two preps, 124 students total), plus her scholarly activities and service commitments, negatively impacted her health.

In the spring of 2010 after reflecting on these lessons learned, OCAPICA allocated budget and part-time responsibilities for a vol-

unteer coordinator as well as committed to staff meetings to facilitate communication among site supervisors. Yee modified the special course syllabus and received approval in time to offer the course in the fall of 2010. Reflecting on the toll of the significant work needed to scale up the project, we explored corporate support to seed these pilot efforts and build a pathway to seek future multiyear grant funding. The pilot provided material evidence to stimulate reflection, assessment, improvement, and transformation.

#### **6. Implementation (RA); Partner (RR).**

Offering ASAM 230 for the first time as a special course in the fall of 2010 and the spring of 2011, while not perfect, worked well because we could anticipate challenges. We had established a partnership culture of meeting / communicating regularly, raising concerns respectfully, and addressing issues as best we could given our organizational and personal limitations.

#### **7. Reflect/Assess/Improve Plan (RA); Transform (RR).**

Intentionally engaging in the previously mentioned practices creates a sustainable cycle that supports a partnership culture of trust, honesty, and respect. With a consistent infusion of college student mentors, OCAPICA staff could focus on enriching the afterschool curriculum for its high school youth while mentoring college students in CBO work. Yee's permanent course proposal for ASAM 230 was approved by CSUF's Academic Senate in the fall of 2011. Together, we had secured a corporate seed grant to support our curriculum development and formal assessment. By 2011, both our Ring of Action and Relational Ring activities transformed our service-learning relationship into a partnership at its core.

#### The Partnership Core

Establishing a Partnership Core of trust, authentic communication, integrity, and democratic decision making lies at the heart of a sustainable community-university partnership. The values and actions of the Partnership Core and Relational Ring form the foundational principles and norms of the partnership. A healthy Partnership Core strengthens the Relational Ring and facilitates robust Ring of Action activities.

At the end of spring 2011, our Partnership Core was tested when Yee was diagnosed with cancer and immediately took medical leave. Education faculty colleague Dr. Natalie Tran continued formal assessment in 2011 and 2012 with corporate grant support. ASAM faculty

colleague Dr. Tu-Uyen Nguyen stepped in to teach ASAM 230 from 2011 to 2012. Cheri and Nguyen applied for and received a \$1.3 million federal grant from 2012 to 2017 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health to fund further development of OCAPICA's youth programming. Through the grant's Healthy Asian Pacific Islander-Youth Empowerment Program (HAPI-YEP), OCAPICA's Youth Education team created a five-year pipeline program supporting a cohort of students from eighth through twelfth grade. Yee maintained communication with OCAPICA staff while on medical leave.

Upon returning from leave in 2014, Yee's ASAM 230 students were placed with HAPI-YEP. By this time, Cheri had been promoted to Program Director of both OCAPICA's Youth and Health Programs, but new Youth Program staff had been hired. Cheri's commitment to our community-university partnership facilitated its revival. Yee and OCAPICA staff once again made time to engage in the SHIP model to determine our next steps. OCAPICA staff Victor Joseph Atilano, Kassandra Tong, and Anthony Villanueva streamlined service-learner supervision, improved administrative systems, served as co-instructors in the classroom, and developed ASAM 230's first ten-week field-based curriculum based on student feedback. Making our partnership's cultural values, norms, and process transparent to ourselves through the evolution of this model led us to consider its implications for other activists, practitioners, university faculty, and staff.

### Limitations, Implications, and Recommendations

Although the SHIP model is based on a service-learning community-university partnership, the model may inform all types of working relationships and partnerships within as well as between organizations. Here we discuss its limitations, implications, and recommendations for potential and current collaborators and for the fields of AAS and service learning.

#### **Limitations**

While naming and analyzing components of the SHIP model is necessary to discuss its applications, implementing its steps may not be linear nor as easily practiced. Nor must all steps be followed for a relationship to become a partnership. The model is limited to our respective life experiences and organizational dynamics within the context of serving diverse AAPI populations in Orange County, California.

We anticipate that future scholars and practitioners will enhance this theory. In addition, the study uses solely qualitative data; incorporating quantitative methodologies could have yielded a fuller picture of our partnership development.

### **Implications and Recommendations for Community-University Partnership Development**

The underlying assumptions and beliefs of the SHIP model have great implications for partnership development among community members/organizations and universities. The model embraces a democratic, strengths-based approach, that is, we used our respective assets to address one another's needs and did not presume that one partner was a "savior" and the other partner "less fortunate." Involving students in these partnerships is an opportunity to model healthy partnership behavior and to teach this strengths-based framework—invaluable critical learning for future leaders and activists. Collaborators may use the SHIP model and Table 1 to determine their scope and capacity to commit to long-range planning. While not highlighted in this resource paper, CSUF's CICE plays a pivotal role in our partnership longevity; universities committed to community-university partnerships should institutionalize such centers with generous support for faculty, staff, and partner development. Perhaps most important, conceptualizing partnership development as a systemic transformation between organizations calls for transforming the organizations, particularly universities, whose mission, culture, budgets, compensation, and tenure/promotion structures should evolve to encourage pedagogical experimentation and adoption of courses involving meaningful community engagement addressing social issues, for example, service learning.

### **Implications and Recommendations for Asian American Studies**

Originating from the unique community-university intersections at the heart of AAS, the SHIP model holds major implications for how we develop and sustain partnerships for activism, teaching, and scholarship. The model makes transparent what some of the "work" of AAS is and could be to actualize our field's values, educate our students, and produce knowledge in ways that maintain relevance and serve our communities. Coalition building among identity-based organizations is a delicate endeavor; the SHIP model may help to identify areas of strength and growth. For example, one of Yee's CBO partners reflected that a potential coalition seemed to lack trust, and when shown

the model, immediately identified Relational Ring activities as missing from their coalition building efforts.

In addition, when considering ways to evolve AAS curricula, programs and departments could consider intersecting with the field of service learning to engage students with community. The model could also assist AAS units with mapping out multiyear plans for curriculum development, community engagement, partnership development, and resource identification and acquisition. If not already part of the AAS program or department mission, this model advocates for incorporating intentional Asian American *and* Pacific Islander American community-based work into departmental mission and function as well as scholarly and student learning goals. Finally, our study opens possibilities for employing blended methodologies and theoretical frameworks to engage in both scholarship and practice. Our partnership and model would not exist had we not theorized and practiced with intersectional, feminist of color, action-research lenses.

### **Implications and Recommendations for Service Learning**

The SHIP model emphasizes the importance of truly engaging and involving community partners in the development and offering of service-learning courses. Even if faculty new to community-university partnerships may not have the capacity to invest in developing a full-fledged service-learning partnership, the model suggests that faculty and those in privileged positions make time to reach out to CBO staff, start conversations about service-learning course collaboration, and be available to answer questions to build a relationship based on reciprocity and respect.

Our study and conceptual model contribute to service-learning research by centralizing our partnership as the unit of analysis, employing action research, and focusing on assets (Cruz and Giles, 2000). Our findings and model fit the description of Sockett's "Systemic and Transformative Relationship" in which "the parties share responsibility for planning, decision making, funding, operations, and evaluation of activities in which each institution is transformed through the relationship" (1998, 76). Sockett also describes the importance of and conditions for establishing trust, which we have found is the binding factor in our Partnership Core. The sustainability of the SHIP model mirrors Janke's assertion that examining partnerships at the organizational level rather than solely at the interpersonal level "is useful in conducting research into what makes partnerships successful over the long-term

or, specifically, why service learning faculty and community partners remain together over many years" (2013, 574-575). Finally, our finding that process matters reflects Moore's report on building democratic communities through community-university engagement, which calls for university actors "moving from instrumentalist ideas about engagement as an outcome to relational models of engagement as a process" (2014, 99).

We hope as well that service-learning scholars will continue to focus their scholarly lenses on partnerships intersecting with AAS, ethnic studies, and women and gender studies.

### Conclusion: Theorizing as Activism

*You may say that I'm a dreamer ... but I'm not the only one.*

John Lennon, musician, songwriter ("Imagine," written by  
Yoko Ono and John Lennon, 1971)

In her essay "Theory as Liberatory Practice," feminist scholar bell hooks tells how she came to theory (1991). The pain she endured from being whipped as a child was "so intense that I could not go on living," and she "found sanctuary in 'theorizing,' in making sense out of what was happening." Of theory, she says, "I found a place where I could imagine possible futures, a place where life could be lived differently ... that theory could be a healing place" (1991, 2).

This notion of theorizing as a sanctuary is akin to our reasons for theorizing. Looking back on our humble imagining in 2008, we realized that our turning to one another to envision a possible future was borne not only out of pain but also out of a historical legacy of AAPI activists whose fearless theorizing gave rise to our community-based organizations and university academic programs over the last fifty years (Hune, 1989; Ishizuka, 2016; Wei, 1993). Their audacity to envision and strategize resulted in institutionalizing these structures that exist to serve our communities today.

The partnership and model we've shared in this resource paper build on this legacy of activism by providing a vision of how these respective institutions may work together with specific strategies to sustain the work. As Bunch's Model of Theory suggests, vision and strategy are the parts of theorizing that help us to "tak[e] action to bring about change" in addition to description and analysis (2005, 14). "In all aspects of theory development," she writes, "theory and activism continually inform and alter each other" (2005, 14-15). Through our work,

we contend that theorizing as activism does not belong to the elite few, but to all who strive for socially just change. We hope that our imagining and creating a partnership manifesting the values of democracy, equity, social justice, and care liberates others to create futures beyond all of our imaginations.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> According to the National Service Learning Clearinghouse, service learning is "a teaching and learning strategy (i.e., pedagogy) that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities" (Ryan, 2012, 4).

<sup>2</sup> ASAM 230 was developed from 2008 to 2010 and first offered in the fall of 2010 as a special course approved by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Academic Senate approved ASAM 230 as a permanent course in the fall of 2011 and a general education course (categories: Lifelong Learning and Diversity) in the fall of 2016. CSUF students complete the General Education requirement (approximately 51 units/17 classes) by choosing courses offered across a range of academic disciplines. As part of our General Education Program, ASAM 230 is one of many choices students may take to satisfy the California State University General Education category E. Lifelong Learning and G.E. Z. Diversity category. They may elect to take this course to satisfy a G.E. requirement. However, for ASAM majors, a community engagement course is required, and again, ASAM 230 is one of the courses that may satisfy this requirement. Technically, ASAM 230 is an elective because not all students must take it, but it satisfies degree requirements for graduation for different types of students.

<sup>3</sup> We have chosen not to use names of colleagues from whom we were not able to obtain permission.

<sup>4</sup> RA stands for Ring of Action and RR stands for Relational Ring.



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## Appendix

Table 1.

<b>Ring of Action</b> = Visible Partnership Activity	<b>Relational Ring</b> = Building Relationships and Trust
<p><b>1. Identify Assets/Needs:</b> Potential collaborators come together to identify assets, strengths, and needs they may address together. Community members' needs should be considered equitably with university needs. Possible synergy and collaborative solutions may result.</p>	<p><b>1. Introduction/Build Trust:</b> Collaborators get to know each other as people and potential partners, perhaps sharing meals. Building trust reciprocally comes with knowing where people come from, what they value, how they see themselves, and what motivates their work. This process is mutually agreed and continually checked as voluntary, not required.</p>
<p><b>2. Identify/Seek Resources:</b> Potential partners seek resources: time, expertise, grants, budgets, structural support such as community and university networks, etc. This step includes delineating roles, signing memoranda of understanding and grant contracts, hiring staff, setting forth work plans, and allocating budgets. Sufficient resources lead to the next step.</p>	<p><b>2. Establish Norms/Clarify Expectations:</b> Potential partners clarify expectations of themselves and each other. They establish community agreements on shared norms, values, and work. Collaborators should be honest about what each can do and include ALL staff at this step, which calls for vulnerability, reflection, and ability to share inner thoughts. Communal reflection creates depth, trust, and insight.</p>
<p><b>3. Plan of Action:</b> Collaborators set forth all known project tasks over months/years. Planning requires creativity and the ability to project use of time, human resources, deadlines, and expertise. Most important is recording who will do what by when and how the work will be supported by available resources.</p>	<p><b>3. Formalize Relationship/Mentorship:</b> Deepening the relationship requires roles to evolve and formalize. Collaborators operate with honesty, integrity, humor, creativity, and ability to imagine. Being conscious of power and hierarchies means that those with "status" continually check their own stances. Those not in "status" positions interact with partners equally. Collaborators mentor each other from their standpoints and expertise.</p>

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**4. Pilot:** Instead of implementing the comprehensive Plan of Action, a pilot (i.e., small-scale version or portion of the Plan of Action, both in terms of time and work) is implemented. The pilot is an excellent way of learning what is necessary to build capacity and deepen relationships for a more intensive, long-term project.

**4. Practice the Relationship:** Collaborators practice to determine if the partnership will work long term. This step calls for consistent communication, feedback, and systematic data collection to conduct evaluation and assessment. During the pilot, the collaboration involves working side by side, communicating as set forth in community agreements, and keeping track of what works well and what could be better.

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**5. Reflect/Assess Pilot/Revise Plan:** Reflecting on and assessing the pilot provide data and feedback for formative assessment that allows collaborators to revise their plan. Making time to assess the pilot achieves two goals: (1) learning systemic challenges in the workflow and (2) practicing how everyone will work together, communicate, and give feedback.

**5. Reflect and Change:** This step is key to deepening the relationship. At this time, it's easy for partners to subconsciously assume their status-related roles and for egos/power dynamics to determine that one perspective is more important than another. Focusing on democratic engagement during the pilot is critical to learning and refining the plan to improve the collaboration. If participants feel silenced or unheard, moving forward can be very difficult. However, if the relationship evolves well, then all partners by this point will feel safe, express ideas and concerns, brainstorm improvements, and change.

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**6. Implementation:** Collaborators implement the Plan of Action at full-scale with knowledge and improvements gained from the pilot. All partners involved operate with more confidence, able to anticipate challenges and address them, and work with one another easily because of the corresponding relationship building.

**6. Partner:** Partners operate democratically as intended. Partners check in continually, maintain trust, and strengthen relationships by being mindful of how and what they are doing, communicating, and making decisions. Pressured situations may cause people in hierarchical positions to "pull rank" or prioritize their goals over their partner's goals; it's important to schedule regular conversations that reset power imbalance, normalize communicating about both successes and issues, and adjust or reallocate workload.

**7. Reflect/Assess/Improve Plan:**

Much like step 5, reflecting on and assessing the implementation of the full-scale plan yields data and ideas for subsequent needs of the project. At this point, collaborators may continue this collaboration by engaging in the Ring of Action again. Conversely, collaborators may decide to part ways.

**7. Transform:** As the Relational Ring comes full circle, the relationship matures and deepens into a partnership at its core. Making time to reflect on, assess, and revise the full-scale program and relationship is the important internal work of conveying authentic concerns, highlighting areas of improvement for both action and relationship building. This step requires courage, honesty, humility, openness, and a willingness to view oneself/one's organization as the one to change for a healthy partnership to continue. This internal transformation makes possible improvements in workflow and management and deepens the partnership culture. The cycle continues and the collaboration becomes a sustainable, mutually beneficial partnership based on trust and reciprocity.