



PEER LEADERSHIP THROUGH A DOMAINS OF MENTORING APPROACH

CHELSIE L. ROMULO | 2022-2024 DEI FELLOW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This DEI Fellow project presents a Domains of Mentoring Approach for developing Community Cultural Wealth among Peer Leaders at University of Northern Colorado. The implementation of the project includes two student leadership initiatives (the President’s Leadership Program and the Climate Leadership Initiative) along with revisions to the Leadership Studies Minor curriculum and a newly proposed Applied Leadership Certificate.

Many students indicate lack of a sense of belonging in exit surveys when they leave before graduation and there is a robust body of literature to support both peer mentoring programs and learning cohorts as ways to develop and encourage a sense of belonging among students. This report presents an evaluation of current mentoring support on campus and proposes a structure for inclusive peer mentoring that is scalable across campus to contribute to the Students First and Empower Inclusivity vision elements of the [Rowing, Not Drifting Strategic Plan](#).

Community Cultural Wealth

Toward these goals, the integration of Yosso’s theoretical framework of Community Cultural Wealth (See Figure 1; Yosso 2005) is applied here. Community Cultural Wealth refers to “the array of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that often go unrecognized and unacknowledged”. Applying this framework shifts the perspective of student learning and leadership development from a deficit mindset related to the perception of leadership as some innate ability to centering experiential knowledge and the ability to grow and develop leadership abilities and cultural wealth as a skill set.

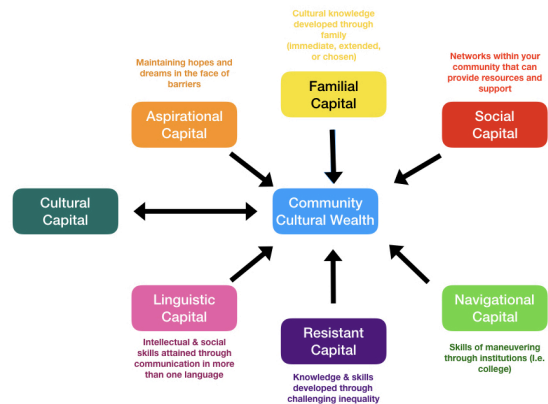


Figure 1: Community Cultural Wealth

Domains of Mentorship

To critically appraise potential for peer support in this phase of *Re-Evaluation*, I am applying a framework presented by Gunn et al. (2017) that proposes 4 domains of mentoring (Table 1). This peer mentoring program is taking a Community of Practice approach, where support and resources across the institution are leveraged for cross-campus support as opposed to creating new programs. A new culture of

connectivity and community support is needed to amplify the existing support services on campus. Table 1 describes the mentor challenges experienced within each domain, the potential partners who can support addressing those challenges and the benefits of partnership, and the sessions needed with those partners. Anti-racist readings, practices, and policy development will be embedded within each domain, providing a foundation for the structural system.

Table 1. Partner support activities by domains of mentoring, modified from Gunn et al. 2017.

<p>Psychological and Emotional Support <i>CCW:</i> Linguistic, Cultural, & Navigational Capital <i>Partners:</i> Counseling Services Cultural Center Liaisons / UNITE Ombudsman</p>	<p>Goal Setting and Career Path <i>CCW:</i> Aspirational, Navigational & Resistant Capital <i>Partners:</i> Center for Career Readiness Alumni Services</p>
<p>Academic Subject Knowledge Support <i>CCW:</i> Aspirational & Navigational Capital <i>Partners:</i> Tutoring Services Faculty</p>	<p>Existence of a Role Model <i>CCW:</i> Aspirational, Social & Familial Capital <i>Partners:</i> Office of Student Life Cultural Centers</p>

Future Work: Expanding Campus Wide Peer Support Programs

Here we describe a best case scenario for policy standards for peer mentoring or peer leadership programs on campus to provide consistent support for students in these positions:

1. **All students serving in peer mentor or peer leader positions should be compensated for their efforts.** This way student mentors and leaders don't have to choose between job hours and peer support hours, reducing an equity gap in mentoring positions.
2. **Students in peer mentoring, peer support, or peer leadership roles enroll in a LEAD Course that provides the structure and programming to build leadership community and connection with campus support services.** The course tuition would be included for students as part of the compensation package of their position so that the opportunity to serve as a peer mentor would not exclude those who have more financial needs than others. The critical structure provided by the course uses existing norms (attending class and grading) to encourage participation and create a structure for attendance. No cost to the student ensures equitable access to participation for students.

References

Gunn, F., Lee, S. H., & Steed, M. (2017). Student perceptions of benefits and challenges of peer mentoring programs: Divergent perspectives from mentors and mentees. *Marketing Education Review*, 27(1), 15-26.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race ethnicity and education*, 8(1), 69-91.