Aligning Our Pedagogy and Practices with Our Cultural Competency Goals:
Clarifying the Learning Continuum

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Abstract

This invited reflective piece seeks to contextualize the journal's special issue on cultural competency in urban affairs programs from a learning-sciences perspective, which centers on how students learn. The author reflects on his own teaching practices, introduces key frameworks—such as praxial pedagogy, understanding by design, and activity systems—and incorporates insights from all of the articles comprising the special issue.

Keywords: praxial pedagogy; understanding by design; activity systems

Introduction: *Multivoicedness*

When asked to write this reflective piece, I immediately thought of the need to first articulate the multiple voices that speak to me and that I bring to this special issue. The term *multivoicedness* refers to the historical experiences that comprise who we are in the present and that become resources for helping us shape our future (Engeström, 1987, 1999) as we imagine new possibilities (Gutiérrez & Calebrese Barton, 2015). In this regard, my personal identity, my professional experience, and my interdisciplinary academic training speak directly to my approach to teaching and how I interpret other's teachings.

Central to my multivoicedness is my personal identity: As a proud gay, bilingual, Latino immigrant, first-generation college graduate, the intersectionality of these multiple identities inform who I am. This also means that my myriad identities are present when I engage with others, to relate, question, and discover, but most importantly to empathize with students from multiple perspectives. Additionally, having worked across multiple disciplines to address social justice and equity issues for underrepresented communities, I strive to empower those usually absent from decision-making processes. This entails challenging and training my students to be prepared to join such processes to instigate social change.

My pedagogical approach is intentional, given that my disposition toward knowledge building and interpreting reality is rooted in a social justice and equity paradigm. Thus, my approach to teaching is also *praxial*, striving to compel students to positively change their social realities by using the new knowledge they have engaged with in my classrooms. Indeed, for me, *praxial pedagogy* should be the aim of culturally competent and socially situated graduate public affairs education.

Additionally, my training in the disciplines of learning sciences (LS) and urban planning and policy (UPP) has informed my approach to teaching and researching issues of social justice and equity from diverse interdisciplinary theoretical and practical perspectives. This interdisciplinary specialization supports my focus on articulating how higher education instructors should teach disciplines at the intersection of practice and theory that have the potential to impact communities in myriad ways. As such, in my teaching I am mindful of how urban affairs fits within a system of institutions that are key in shaping students and communities. As such, it is not enough for my students to just learn new information and skills; I also need to teach them the dispositions that are required to be ethical, culturally competent professionals in their fields when engaging with issues of diversity, equity, and social justice. This is no different than what I expect from medical, legal, and other professionals whose work directly impacts people's lives.

Developing ethical, culturally competent dispositions, however, is difficult, especially given the lack of rich research in adult development that has gone into researching K-12 student development. Nevertheless, since its beginning, the learning sciences field has been constantly evolving beyond K-12 formal education to focus on informal environments (e.g., libraries, museums, etc.), college and graduate student learning, adult learning, and learning in community settings (Cole & Packer, 2016; Leander, Phillips, & Taylor, 2010; Meléndez et al., 2018; Sommerhoff, Szameitat, Vogel, Chernikova, Loderer, & Fischer, 2018). My training and experiences in the learning sciences lie within these latter three focal areas, which also represent the landscape the articles in this special issue are trying to navigate. These three foci may also comprise subject matter that faculty know less about in relation to aligning their learning interactions and environments with their pedagogy.

Consequently, in light of my academic training, I tend to approach complex evolving phenomena (such as teaching) from a systems approach, specifically using a cultural historical activity system lens (Blunden, 2009; Engeström, 1999; Leontyev, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978; Vygotsky & Luria, 1994). In this framework, taking the time to conceptualize the whole by identifying the key parts and their relations to one another can lead to a firmer grasp on what one is trying to address. I will return to this point in the conclusion to contextualize public affairs education within a larger phenomenon. First, however, I will explain what I mean by praxial pedagogy and a backwards design approach known as understanding by design (UbD), which may be a useful tool for instructors to align their intended learning outcomes with other tools for achieving those outcomes in practice.

Key Frameworks

Praxial Pedagogy

One way to socially situate instruction is to practice what I call praxial pedagogy. Considering the influence of Freire (1970, 1972, 1973), Greene, (1995, 1998), Ladson-Billings, (2009), and Schubert, (1986, 2009), among others, praxial pedagogy forces me to explain disciplinary knowledge as theory based on practice that is applied in a systematic and culturally competent manner. Moreover, given that all the authors included in this special issue focus on training professionals who are entering a range of public affairs careers, our instruction needs to not only prepare students for today's society, but also supporting their abilities to imagine, shape, and strive in a society of the future. As Garcia Zambrana (2018/this issue) quite acutely describes, "the conceptualization of society's evolution … by way of the conservation of formal traits which may have worked in a given epoch, only to be displaced later as changing circumstances render those solutions obsolete, offers an excellent

framework from which to conceptualize the never-ending processes of social change" (p. 3). Yet, in order to evolve, we must first be honest, mindful, and self-reflective (Dong, Nesic, Colgary, Martinez, & Cuerard, 2018/this issue; Sweet, 2018/this issue) about the role(s) that public affairs professionals have played in (re)appropriating power dynamics, especially for communities usually absent from the decision-making process (Lopez, Lugo, Vargas & Mattheis, 2018/this issue; Sweet, 2018/this issue).

I believe strongly that failing to support students' development of their ability to socially innovate is not merely a disservice to those students, but to society itself. Failure to train future practitioners who are adept at meeting the nuances and complexities of society's developing challenges can and will result in reductive explanations of cause and effect, and in a failure to address the needs of the most disadvantaged (see Jemal & Bussey, 2018/this issue for a more comprehensive articulation of the need to address multi-systemic problems and inequities).

Thus, praxial pedagogy should focus on apprenticing students in socially situated and culturally competent practices by imparting to them epistemic frames, which encompass the content, interest, identity, and associated practices that are key to our disciplines (Shaffer, 2006). Cultural competency needs to be central when teaching these epistemic frames since it "goes deeper by essentially examining the complex anatomy of cultural identity and how it can sometimes be symbiotic or at odds with a given social context, depending upon explicit and implicit values, norms and beliefs" (Jackson, 2018/this issue, p. 17). Similar to Foucault's (1972) *episteme*, in which he conceptualizes the relationship between the "discursive practices and structures of knowledge," epistemic frames are the "proverbial 'hats' or 'glasses' we don as we take on a variety of identities or perspectives in dealing with different situations" (Shaffer, 2006, p. 232). Thus, if we can support students' development of the epistemic frames needed as planners, social workers, or civil servants, then we can tap these ways of knowing across different situations related to their disciplinary, social, cultural, and historical identities. In addition, the teaching and learning of epistemic frames must include critiques of other frames that perpetuate unequal distribution of power, access, resources, and expertise alongside the elaboration of new frames with revolutionary potential to shift the structural imbalance of the Cartesian divide (Akkerman, 2001) or what Sweet (2018/this issue) and others have referred to as the "I think, therefore I am" logic (p. 11; see also Grosfoguel, 2011).

As such, in my praxial pedagogy, I aim to acculturate my students and future professionals to move beyond the simple acquisition of "declarative and procedural knowledge" to providing them with the abilities to discern "a context within which a particular situation is perceived, interpreted, and judge" (Broudy,

1977, as cited in Shafer, 2006, p. 227). I know that both my students' and my own abilities to discern such contexts are influenced by our multivoicedness. For instance, what I may interpret as shyness someone else may perceive as exclusion. How we argue (i.e., academically, scientifically) about this needs to be based on the data available; therefore, even if it may seem remedial, I take the time to ask my students to tell me the difference between an observation and an inference. I usually do this using a video case study from my own research on Latino immigrants' engagement in participatory budgeting (Meléndez & Martinez-Cosio, 2018), through which, as Sweet (2018/this issue) argues, I can provide an example of "analysis and critique of the planner's own social, cultural, racial, or gendered position and power in society" (p. 2). I have also done this by employing news segments and interviews, incorporating current events as points of departure for discussion as often as possible. In these activities, we reconstruct definitions: *observations* as evident through any of the senses, not just visually, and *inferences* as interpretations not evident but based on one or more observations. Of course, if interpretations are not supported by observations, I then introduce the notion of *conjectures*. In my classroom, this exercise is connected to the learning objective of making clear and evidence-supported arguments—verbal or written—that engage with multiple truths. However, it is not enough for students to learn how to provide clear and evidence-based arguments if they do not also understand how this skill or new knowledge is transferable outside the classroom and in their professions. This includes how the ability or inability to engage and critique these scripts can further perpetuate power differentials and what counts or is discounted as knowledge.

To connect classroom content to community settings, we as faculty must support students' ability to transfer what they learn from our instruction (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). One of the best ways to accomplish this is to extend our classrooms into the practices, environments, and contexts that are key to our disciplines, while scaffolding students' engagement in the same. For example, we cannot expect our students to think and act like public affairs professionals without engaging them in the practices of their particular profession, such as those of planners, social workers, or public administrators. Also, we should train all future public affairs professionals to handle the milieu of diversity that is required within their profession, including fostering in students the ability to use both objective and subjective data in their reasoning. This explicit use of both types of data represents my concerted attempt to bridge the "Cartesian divide." In my opinion, a decoupling of objective and subjective data reasoning is, at the very least, an unethical mis-training of students in practices that do not support their ability to strive in their future professions (Agyeman & Erickson, 2012). In fact, in other professions, we would call this malpractice.

For example, in my Urban Problems/Issues course, I have consistently aimed to support my students in conducting field-based applied research that aims to explicitly connect theory to practice. I do this to expose my students to new contexts, while also enabling them to engage with the class content in the real world. For their final assignment, for instance, students research an urban problem/issue in an assigned community, where they are required to identify and interview a professional who works in the field and who is trying to solve the respective problem/issue. Students then present their findings and write a white paper arguing for a proposed solution that is supported by the literature, observations of the community, and interview data. This type of activity aligns with the learning outcome of orienting my students to a practice that is essential for public affairs professionals. As Doan and Lieber (2018/this issue) make clear, faculty need to explore the multitude of "diverse subject positions that students need to be careful about making assumptions" (p. 12). My ability to closely connect this exercise to practice, while also basing it on the content that students have learned in the classroom, support their ability to transfer the learning outcomes to situations outside of my classroom once my time with them is over. In addition, by requiring the students to produce a white paper as opposed to a research paper, I challenge my students to see themselves as "historical actors" (Gutiérrez & Jurow, 2016) who have the potential to move beyond critique to imagine different futures.

I should note here my presupposition, that culturally competent and socially situated praxial education is necessary for any student enrolled in any disciplinary-related public affairs program. (In fact, as I write this, I am hard-pressed to think of any discipline in which this is not the case). Research has well established that meaningful classroom learning outcomes must take into account the increasing complexity of classroom learning environments as well as students' social and cultural characteristics and experiences (Farr & Trumbull, 1997; Schultz, 1987). There is no longer a need to quantify or justify it; as higher education faculty, we now know that we have an ethical and professional responsibility to our students and our society/communities to figure out how best to do this in the classroom. Diversity is no longer a problem waiting to be addressed or an opportunity waiting to be exploited (Agyeman & Erickson, 2012). Instead, as Jackson et al. (2018/this issue) suggest, diversity is a given, with both its challenges and opportunities that require a variety of skillsets that must be explored, learned, and developed within the "safer" supported confines of classrooms engaged in praxial pedagogy.

As this exploration and learning occurs, what are some key components instructors and institutions need to have in mind? In the learning sciences, supporting students' learning of disciplinary tools, whether linguistic, conceptual,

or practical instruments of urban affairs, is one such component, and we can see very quickly how identifying the right tools for facilitating the intended learning goals becomes key. In fact, in the learning sciences, some argue that socially, culturally, and historically situated learning that develops students' identities happens when they participate in intentional activities mediated by tools (Arastoopour & Shafer, 2013; Lave, 1988, 1996; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995, Radinsky, Hospelhorn, Meléndez, Riel & Washington, 2014). Thus, as an instructor, the more intentional I am about desired classroom learning, the more likely it is that I (and my students) will achieve those outcomes. One way to map this intentionality in instruction is through understanding by design (UbD).

Understanding by Design

Understanding by design can help instructors align their intended goals with mediating tools and assessments (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Since professors do not always start with learning objectives in their lesson planning, providing them with a framework that supports such an intentional teaching approach is key. This is especially important in a graduate public affairs program applying a praxial pedagogy that incorporates key epistemic content, which must be taught in a deliberately supportive learning environment for students of different backgrounds (Bagley & Shaffer, 2011; Brown & Campione, 1996; Edelson, 2002). In this way, we ensure that we move beyond mere active-learning exercises to an alignment of learning objectives with the pedagogical activity and tools needed to make students' participation worthwhile.

It is important to keep in mind that active-learning activities are not enough, since, as instructors, we may take student participation as a sign of good pedagogy. However, participation is data to be assessed to determine if students are actually achieving the intended goals. Instead, participation needs to be connected to the learning objectives of the activity. As such, to improve the opportunities for epistemic learning, we must ensure that we align our learning objectives with the pedagogical activity and tools necessary for worthwhile student participation. Attending to epistemic and embedded pedagogical content is central to any learning activity that is mediated by a tool to meet its learning potential (Brown & Campione, 1996; Edelson, 2002; Shafer, 2004).

For example, as all of the articles in this special issue make clear, certain epistemic frames should be central to praxial pedagogy within urban affairs disciplines, including dealing with competing interests, navigating the milieu of socioeconomically diverse actors, and identifying and resolving the tensions and contradictions that come with addressing wicked problems. In addition, as Garcia Zambrana (2018/this issue) argues poignantly, the role of leadership is an often overlooked epistemic frame that public affairs programs need to tackle. In this sense, leadership is a verb, a way of acting and thinking, not a noun used to

personify a person's role. Indeed, these epistemic frames cannot be taught in ways that "students are treated as passive bystanders to knowledge, and learn not to engage in the material or subject matter, but how to submit to the whims of the professoriate" (p. 5). Instead, all of these epistemic frames require activities and tools that support students' abilities to question the ontology and epistemology of such constructs rather than take them as given. This includes intentional activities that incorporate students' experiences within these constructs while providing counternarratives problematizing application of the constructs in sociocultural settings (Sweet, 2018/this issue). However, we also need to make sure we move beyond problematization to offer ways in which the latter epistemic frames can be used in the service of "hope for a reimagined type of city and new relations among those who live in these urban areas" (Lopez et al., 2018/this issue, p. 17).

At its core, UbD is a simple instructional model that comprises three stages for bringing about desired results—that is, determined outcomes, acceptable evidence, and strategic instruction—and that ultimately begins by mapping instructional planning starting from the end. Understanding by design encourages educators to plan their instruction by first envisioning the end result of student learning; determining what materials should be used and activities completed are ancillary tasks to be performed after clarity of purpose is achieved. In this conceptualization, instructional tools, such as readings, GIS, etc., and the activities that use such tools represent the inputs that mediate the student actions for achieving the learning goals. The basic premise of UbD is a simple question of "what should students walk out of the door able to understand, regardless of what activities are used" (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 17).

Accordingly, when speaking of culturally competent pedagogy, well-intentioned instructors may fall into a trap UbD seeks to avoid. By organizing an activity or assigning a particular reading, cultural competency may be treated as an extra, supplementary to the "real" learning goals of acquiring certain information or knowledge. If so, the particular learning goal of the lesson will most likely not be modified (through strategic thinking) to account for what cultural competence means within the overarching learning trajectory of students in urban affairs programs. As Seal's (2018/this issue) field report on her Cultural Emotions course makes clear, our instruction has to be geared toward a "long-term growth process offering students multiple opportunities to gain skills and knowledge, test them out in the real world, critically reflect, and refine their approaches" (p. 19). Additionally, Sweet (2018/this issue) provides two detailed examples that aim to instill future planners with the disposition on "how to engage in ongoing self-reflection and self-critique not only of their work, but of who they are—their social, cultural, and racial identities" (p. 16). Indeed, culturally competent praxial education should strive to move beyond the

acquisition of skills and knowledge to dispositional learning.

For this reason, I argue that instructors should focus on placing students along "learning trajectories rather than [achieving] isolated learning goals" (Radinsky et al., 2014, p. 144). Jackson et al. (2018/this issue) confirm similar perspectives from their research in four urban affairs programs across the United States. As such, if we envision the backwards design of our classrooms as a single step in our students' journeys, then check-marking isolated goals without thinking of what our students need to strive as professionals is a failure to envision the classroom as just one component of a larger system.

As Garcia Zambrana's (2018/this issue) example of leadership makes clear, if a learning outcome of urban affairs education is to cultivate future leadership, then we need to create learning opportunities in and outside of our classrooms for students to develop the skills needed to discern meaningful details from complex situations, and to transfer these skills, "not the truth of how or where to implement some cookie-cutter solution" (p. 9). This includes cultivating their abilities to be mindful and to interact with humility (Dong et al., 2018/this issue; Sweet, 2018/this issue) with a variety of communities in roles outside of "bureaucratic functionaries, managers, or impractical, but opinionated, theoreticians" (Garcia Zambrana, 2018/this issue, p. 2). Instead, students need to learn how to reflect on "their own beliefs and values in dialogue with the communities they serve (Seals, 2018/this issue, p. 7), emphasizing learning activities that place students in community settings, where they learn with others about the content they are exposed to in the classrooms. I believe this type of community-centered fieldwork not only is necessary for bridging the theory and practice divide, but also represents a form of apprenticeship around student civic engagement. As Jamal and Bassey (2018/this issue) maintain, identity development takes place through participation in actions.

One additional component that instructors should keep in mind when engaging students in culturally competent pedagogy is how knowledge is subjective as well as socially, culturally, and politically constructed. Although at times unintentional, educators may privilege some forms of knowledge as they select one educational goal over another, which can ultimately advantage some students, while simultaneously disadvantaging others (Barab, Dodge, Thomas, Jackson, &Tuzun, 2007; Gay, 2007; Schultz, 1987). Discussion about instructors privileging certain knowledge is missing in this "backwards" curriculum discourse, and even though I present it here as a useful tool for lesson planning, we need to question what and whose knowledge is being privileged in and/or left out of our instruction. This happens in a variety of ways, from what authors we assign for reading assignments to whose starting point (i.e., perspective) we begin discussions from and the counter examples and narratives we provide (Lopez et

al., 2018/this issue). These decisions are informed both consciously and subconsciously by a variety of factors, including where we were educated, our own privileged and/or unprivileged backgrounds, experiences with cities, etc. (Garcia Zambrana, 2018/this issue; Lopez et al., 2018/this issue; Seals, 2018/this issue; Sweet, 2018/this issue)

Using UbD, with an understanding of its imperfections, is a way for instructors, in the words of Garcia Zambrana (2018/this issue), "to create order and maintain focus on a knowledge base or a particular skillset therein" (p 10). Yet, on the other hand, the instructor must also maintain a flexible curriculum to allow students to find answers relevant to their lives, to their communities, and to their times" (p. 4). This also includes using instructional materials and methods with which we may not have expertise (for example, any of those discussed in this special issue). There is great value in instructors admitting (modeling) to students that an expert can try a new tool and the whole (students and instructor) learning from the process itself.

Without considering those with diverse sociocultural backgrounds, interests, and experiences, the UbD approach to teaching may produce incomplete learning if it is missing any central learning objectives related to diversity. This is worth repeating: Instruction that lacks cultural competency or does not incorporate it strategically as part of an overarching learning trajectory for students is professional malpractice. Therefore, it is incumbent upon instructors, higher education institutions, and accrediting agencies to think constantly of how cultural competency is systematically incorporated into pedagogical practices, making it a key component and not just an extra of particular topics.

Concluding Thoughts

While most of my reflection has so far focused on individual practice—that is, my own teaching practices and my thoughts on the rich articles included in this special issue—it is important to examine collective and systemic practice as well. As Jackson et al.'s (2018/this issue) research highlights, the systemic inclusion of teaching and learning cultural competence brings about a wide range of collective and system-level practices that includes "the development of curriculum, orientation of faculty and administrators, and shared values regarding the importance of cultural competency in pedagogical approaches as well as behaviors and practices for student recruitment and inclusion" (p. 27). As this special issue makes clear, the further we push to figure out how to do this holistically, the more tension and contradictions will arise requiring changes in practices.

For me, this is where cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) (Blunden, 2009; Engeström, 1999; Leontyev, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978; Vygotsky & Luria,

1994) becomes a useful heuristic model for conceptualizing how teaching in a culturally competent manner for a highly diverse society requires that we think of how our collective practice is embedded within a system of higher education and accreditation that fits within larger social processes.

Roth and Lee (2007) stress that "the term *activity* is not to be equated with relatively brief events with definite beginning and end points … but an evolving, complex structure of mediated and collective human agency" (p. 198). This means, for instance, looking at graduate education as a complex system constituting parts in relation to one another. Activity systems provide the necessary conceptual model for making sense of a context that "integrates the subject, the object and the instruments (material tools such as technology, UbD, as well as language, like new ways to talk about individuals or communities) into a unified whole" (Engeström, 1990, p. 79) (see Figure 1).
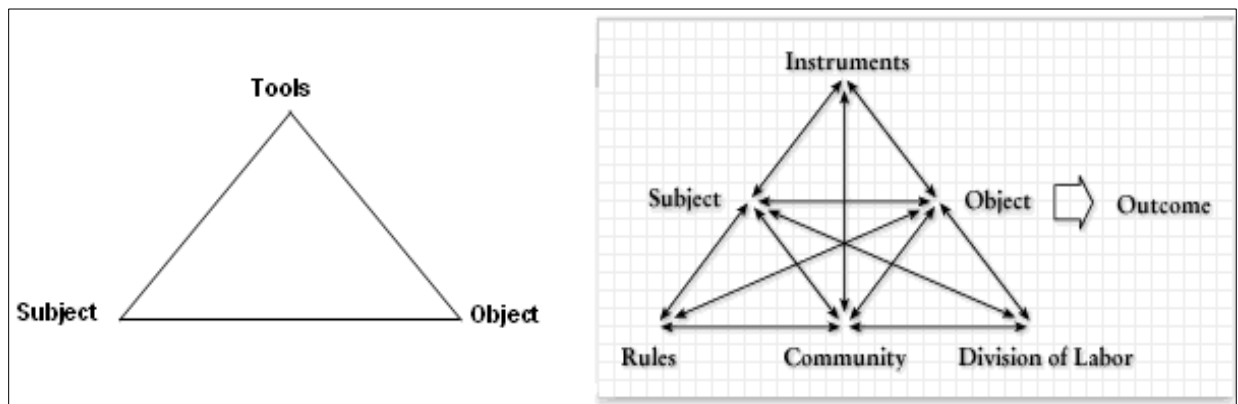

Figure 1. Vygotsky's model of mediated action (left) and its common reformulation (right) (Engeström, 1987).

In the context of Engeström's (1987) model, allow me to conceptualize students and instructors as the subjects, while the object (ultimate goal) is the professionalization of a workforce that not only shares certain standards but also common knowledge and skills (see Figure 2). One of the outcomes of this goal is the practice of public affairs in a more consistent way that delivers culturally competent services to an ever-increasingly diverse public. This education happens under certain rules (accreditation), within a community of practice (administrators, regulators, alumni, government, and communities), whose practices are divided by expertise (division of labor). The actual doing, or educating, is mediated through the instruments, of which cultural competency is only one tool to equip students to navigate and understand diverse environments.
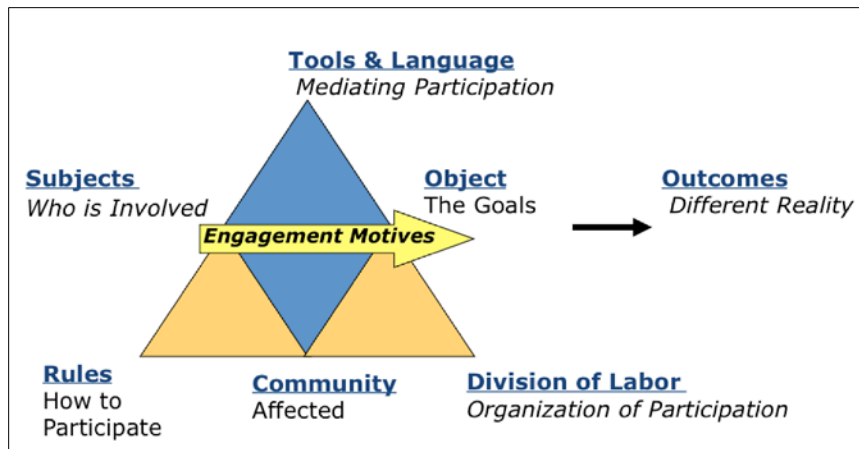
Figure 2. Conceptualization of urban affairs education as an activity system.

Instructors within a social justice and equity paradigm (Jackson et al., 2018/this issue) aim for what CHAT characterizes as expansive learning: the transformation that occurs through changes in practices that are achieved through a division of labor and rules and regulations. In activity systems, practices are the means of participation both afforded by and necessary for achieving the object of the activity, the ultimate goal that brings us together to engage in this activity system (Greeno & Engeström, 2014). In this way, the participants co-construct and mediate their actions using instruments as they debate and negotiate the object of the activity system (the ultimate goal) (Engeström, 1990; Greeno & Engeström, 2014). Expansive learning occurs when, through the practices of our activity, we begin to alter the intent and/or goals of the activity system.

In CHAT, human activity is seen as "social activity meeting social or collective needs; the needs of individuals are met only due to the meetings of social needs" (Blunden, 2009, p. 4). As such, activity theory focuses on mediated action as the mode for understanding one's environment and practices while engaging in activity that attempts to meet a particular need—which is how, through the act of engaging in activity, individuals alter the activity itself at both the micro and macro levels. As the activity system adapts to the differentiating yet collective participants' object (goal), a new activity is socially constructed through participation (Vygotsky & Luria, 1994). As new participants (those from under-represented groups) fight to join the activity system of higher education, practices must change as tensions and contradictions arise and the new participants call for more culturally competent models. The changes that result from resolving these tensions and contradictions constitute expansive learning

(Engeström & Sannino, 2011) at the collective and system levels (Meléndez, 2016, 2018).

The practices and models presented in this special issue are excellent case studies of the tensions and contradictions that are emerging from the efforts of those who care about how best to prepare students for the diversity needs of evolving society. These case studies offer rich examples of attempts (both successful and not) to create new practices that aim to teach future professionals the essential skills, information, knowledge, and, most importantly, dispositions that push the boundaries of what is possible. The points of agreement and disagreement among the articles should not be seen as a weakness of our collective efforts but rather as evidence that the public affairs higher education activity system is going through its consternation phase as it evolves and expands into new practices to meet new goals.

Just as I need to think of how my actions and practices as an instructor fit into system-level activity, I also push and build my students' abilities to think critically about social systems through my praxial pedagogy. In so doing, I want and need my students to develop expansive "imaginaries of citizenship" (Meléndez & Radinsky, 2018). Imaginaries are ways to see the past, present, and future, connecting this historical multivoicedness with new insights that transcend previously understood structural restrictions with expansive possibilities for new ways of action and being (Gutiérrez & Calebrese Barton, 2015). As such, I want my students to see themselves and me as historical actors (Gutiérrez & Jurow, 2016) who are neither tied to nor free from structures, while neither solely responsible nor solely not responsible for their actions, but living in a dialectic between the two. Positioning ourselves as historical actors implies that my students and I need to see our abilities to engage with diverse individuals and communities in humble, reflective, and mindful ways as important enough to create ripples in a historical continuum with the potential for transformative and revolutionary social change.

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Additionally, Dr. Meléndez leads half-day professional development workshops for improving teaching effectiveness for instructors in the social and applied sciences at the annual Urban Affairs Association conference. Dr. Meléndez received his doctorate from the Learning Sciences program at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), with a co-discipline in Urban Planning and Policy.