

## MULTICULTURAL LEARNING FOR STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY'S LEARNING

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### ABSTRACT

In many references, it is proposed that the big theme of multiculturalism is the gap on things related to race, religion and ethnicity. The impact is the rise of conflicts among society which lead to radicalism, disputes, even violence. In a different perspective, multiculturalism can be defined as more than race, religion, and ethnicity, but also things related to human needs. Adopting the theme developed by Bennet (2003) on multiculturalism learning, community needs aspect becomes a part that needs to be regarded in designing multiculturalism learning. The efforts to prevent multicultural-related problems in the community will be comprehensive if the causing effects can be well defined. This was not only limited to an issue related to race, religion, and ethnicity, but also to variation and differences in community needs. According to Maslow, human needs are physiological needs, safety needs, love/belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs. These requirements become critical elements in designing multicultural learning for strengthening the community learning. The community should be strong to deter and anticipate various social threats, and learning is one of the ways to protect the community from these treats.

**KEYWORDS:** multicultural learning, community's learning.

### INTRODUCTION

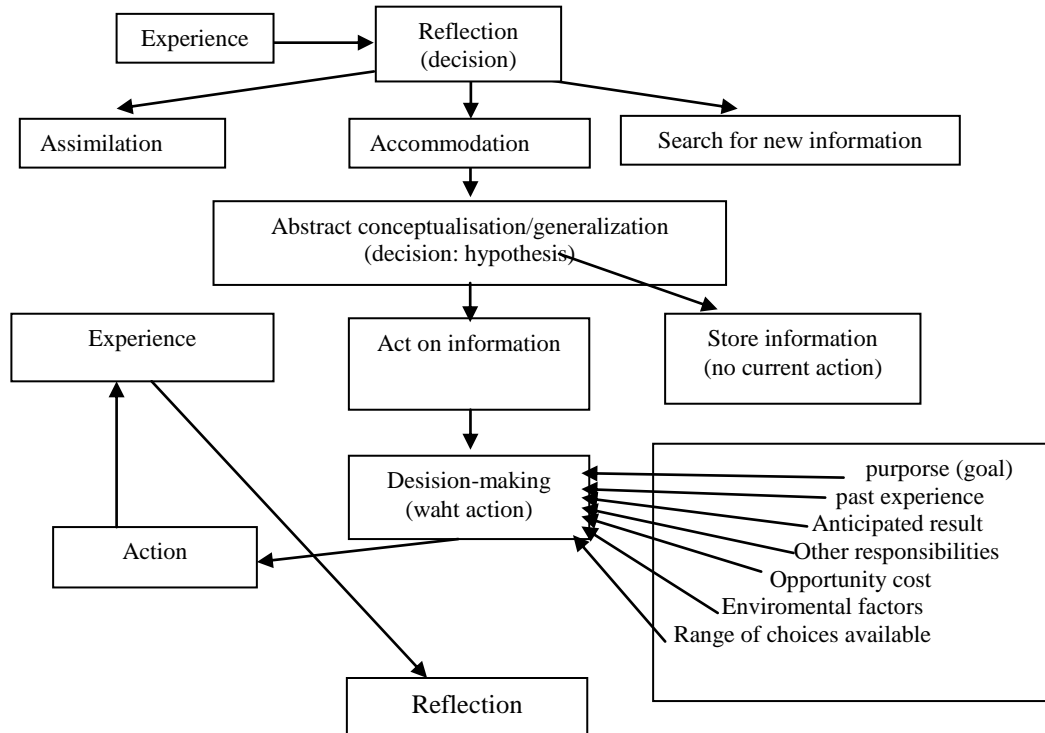
Knowledge is something embedded from generation to generation in every community. It serves as a mean of survival. With that in mind, a community that engages with the dynamics of another group would be ironic. This is because the existence of such a community heavily relies on the situation of its surrounding.

The community of the LuluO village, Biluhu district, whose heads of the family working as labours in fishermen's boat in Bitung and Manado is among the examples of the problem previously explained.

These men leave their family for several months. Such a condition is without question vulnerable to social problems. On the other hand, the village of the men holds a potential, yet abundance natural resources within its coastal area. The reason for these villagers' departure is because of the lack of human resource. Most of them are primary-level graduates, and even some are uneducated; this impacts on their capacity to support their life. The men are forced to fulfil the needs of their family with only limited capacity and experience.

Wilson (1999) illustrates a scheme in which ones' experience is the stepping stone of the cycle of the

learning process in the following diagram (p.214).



**Figure 1. Learning Spiral**

The diagram shows a number of processes of learning spiral, i.e., experience, reflection, and action. The shaping of knowledge through a learning process takes place during the reflection stage. In other words, a particular learning atmosphere is required to create and direct a reflection regarding ones' experience.

Accommodation and assimilation indicate a continuous development in learning; this is regarded as a sync between ones' progress and their experience. This can only be established if someone is physically or non-physically active to discover new ideas and experiences.

The results of an in-depth interview with the villagers of Biluhu village reveal that they are capable of creating a better human resource with their skills. Furthermore, it is possible to develop such skills into a number of learning concepts or themes for the people in that village. Sewing, fish canning, snacks industries, and flower arranging are among the skills of the community in Biluhu village. Moreover,

farming activities and raising livestock, i.e., chicken, goats, and cows are also potential to be conducted in the village. These are supported by the richness of natural resources within the areas of the village, such as coastal area, sea, and mainland coasts. However, the excessive amount of the natural resources is not utilised properly due to some factors, such as: (1) poor educational level of the villagers; (2) limited infrastructure and facilities of farming and fisheries; (3) limited funding from economic and financial institutions; (4) the lack of awareness of protecting the environment; (5) low productivity rates; (6) conventional networking; (7) limited access to markets; (8) poor post-harvesting treatment.

Such a condition blames several aspects, i.e., (1) no initiatives to promote changes, (2) overly concern the risks of failure, (3) poor technical competencies in practice, (4) limited social supports and (5) financial condition.

In general, utilising the natural resources of the coastal area consists of extractive and non-extractive

utilisation. Extractive utilisation refers to activities related to extracting natural resources. It covers several activities, such as oil, gas, and mineral mining, coral extraction, fisheries activities, such as cultivating mangrove, fish, sea cucumber, seaweed, and utilising beach sand. On the other hand, the non-extractive utilisation is different with the previous activities; this involves activities that have nothing to do with extracting natural resources. The example of such a utilisation is mostly to use the area as a

tourism industry, non-extractive education or workshop, venue for water sports, and site for research.

The community within the site object tends to exploit the natural resources in their village excessively which holds more risks and requires more human strength, i.e., coral extraction and sand mining.

In fact, the area is potential to be a centre for integrated farming and agricultural area.



**Figure 2. Coral and Sand Mining Activity in the Site Object despite its Potential to be a Farming Site**

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The above discussion reveals that the community in LuluO village is capable of developing both their human resources and natural resources (coastal areas). Therefore, a well-designed development programme is necessary to advance the community further continuously. Learning enhancement programs are the key to conceptualise this goal.

The programs are through workshops targeted for some groups within the community based on the learning concepts or themes applicable to the skills of each group. In addition, the grouping considers the sync between social relations and the needs of the learning concepts.

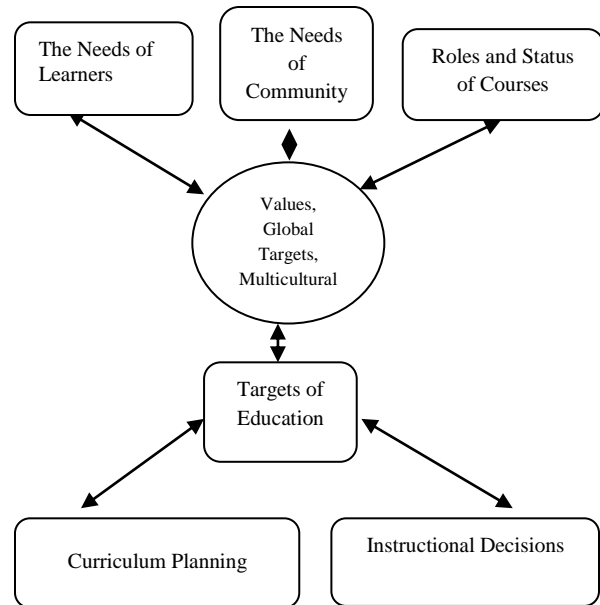
This process is conducted gradually with a number of stages: (1) identifying the needs of the learning concepts or themes, (2) informing and encouraging the community to participate in the learning group,

(3) grouping the community, (4) institutionalising the learning group, (5) education accompaniment on each group, (6) employing the environmental-oriented facilities and learning resources, (7) internalisation of information technology-based learning resources, and (8) technology-oriented education. These are in line with the notion of the development of multicultural learning by Clarke (2005, p.492).; it consists of five challenges: (1) coordinating such a diverse group and creating a positive working environment to enhance dialogue; (2) working with concepts that had no corresponding authoritative textbook, especially when students asked challenging questions; (3) dealing with potential conflicts within groups; (4) handling students' emotions; and (5) taking on a different role, and expectations, as a teacher (not necessarily the authority).

The capacity and needs of each individual can be categorised into several groups, despite these are exclusive from one person to another. People in LuluO village are mostly native inhabitants because they occupy the village from generation to generation in which leads to lower migrants from other places.

LuluO village, which is a part of Biluhu district, is among the target areas of the Local Transmigration and National Transmigration programme as it is written in the Road Map of the Population of People in Gorontalo Regency 2011-2035 (2017, p.46). This plan is effective per 2018. It aims at creating a new social environment to the community. As a result, competitions in fulfilling daily needs are inevitable. This is because the expansion of the population triggers a more competitive struggle in aspects, such as how the people employ a method, technic, or technology. Such a condition favours transmigrants the most considering their competencies in compared to the local inhabitants and therefore creates social conflicts among the community. Consequently, best solutions to cope with the issue are urgently required because the problem is not about groups, religion, or races; it associates with how the people strive to fulfil the needs of their life.

With that in mind, learning empowerment to the community should prioritise the needs of the community. Bennet (2003) and Tilaar (2009) put the needs of a community as one of the elements in designing a multicultural learning as depicted in the following figure.



**Figure 3. Designing Multicultural Education**

The community of the coastal area of LuluO village, Biluhu district, is in need of productive activities to spend their free time working to earn additional income for the family. Such a need, which serves as the consideration of the instruction of multicultural learning, involves pluralism in the school environment as a community organisation. It aims at educating the students to have a sense of respect, such as developing their empathy and tolerance toward others. On top of that, this equips the students with necessary insights, skills, and behaviour to apply in their social life, to partake themselves in a democratic society, as well as to have equal chance to access education. Halvorsen & Smp; Wilson, (2010), Tonbuloglu, Aslan, and Aydin, (2016) agree that education supports pluralism as it is depicted in a multicultural learning called NAME by Amosa and Gorski (2008, p.167). Founded in 1990, the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME)'s definition of multicultural education (2003) is equally broad, endorsing pluralism and diversity while demanding that educational institutions "challenge all forms of discrimination...through the promotion of democratic principles of social justice." Johannes and Erwin (2004) formulate the effectiveness of multicultural learning as follows (p.335-337):

- Learn more about how your own cultural background has influenced your thinking and

behaving. What specific steps can you take to broaden your base of understanding, both of your own culture and of other cultures?

- Identify your basic assumptions, especially as they apply to diversity in culture, ethnicity, race, gender, class, religion, and sexual orientation. Think about how your assumptions are likely to affect your practice as a counsellor. Where did you obtain your knowledge about culture? Are your attitudes about diverse cultures your own, and have you carefully examined them?
- Learn to pay attention to the common ground that exists among people of diverse backgrounds. What are some of the ways in which we all share universal concerns?
- Let clients teach you about relevant aspects of their culture and ask them to provide you with the information you will need to work effectively.
- Spend time preparing clients for counselling. Teach them how to use their therapeutic experience to meet the challenges they face in their everyday lives.
- Be flexible in applying methods you use with clients. Don't be wedded to a specific technique if it is not appropriate for a given client.
- Remember that practising from a multicultural perspective can make your job easier and can be rewarding for both you and your clients.

One should, if possible, explain some issues of multicultural in the learning (Anderson, MacPhee, and Govan, 2000, p.54-55). In summary, effective infusion of diversity issues is a two-way process. Instructors may be trained and willing to infuse multicultural issues in their course work; however, students' perceptions of that experience need to be considered. Otherwise, faculty's noblest intentions may have a little enduring impact. Explaining through illustration represented the problems of multicultural learning in a particular context is applicable throughout the courses. Counsellor educators can use the information presented here to supplement their current multicultural competency curriculum on American Indian issues particular the stereotypes perpetuated by the use of Native-themed mascots, nicknames, and logos (Steinfeldt and Steinfeldt, 2012, p.18).

A multicultural learning promotes the concepts of freedom, justice, and equality. This is echoing the statement seen in Jetton and Davis (2005, p.30-31)

which explain that: They glean from the course that multicultural education is a philosophical concept that is based on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, humanity, and dignity as recognized my numerous documents that include the Declaration of Independence, constitutions of South Africa and the United States, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights put forth by the United Nations. Through these democratic principles, students begin to challenge long-standing forms of discrimination that are evident in schools and society. Pre-service teachers recognise the importance of being prepared for an interdependent world in which they must value cultural differences and pluralism. They explore their own histories and the histories of others in gaining a more positive and multidimensional understanding of the various cultures of diverse groups.

### CONCLUSIONS

The multicultural learning is designed based on the needs of the community as a factor equal with some cultural issues. On top of that, such a learning allows the instructor to implement symbols or illustrations that represent the cultural problems if it is possible. These problems revolve around freedom, justice, equality, equity, humanity, and dignity as recognised my numerous documents that include the Declaration of Independence. The implementation of the learning is conducted in groups within the community in some stages: (1) coordinating such a diverse group and creating a positive working environment to enhance dialogue; (2) working with concepts that had no corresponding authoritative textbook, especially when students asked challenging questions; (3) dealing with potential conflicts within groups; (4) handling students' emotions; and (5) taking on a different role, and expectations, as a teacher (not necessarily the authority).

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