

**Leadership for Social Change:
The Women's Intercultural Leadership Model
Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN**

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The Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership at Saint Mary's College has taken the position that the problems of the 21st century require leadership that is situated within the lens of gender and culture. The Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership embraces the idea that diversity is a virtue, a strength, and an aspiration. Informed by these perspectives, the Center created a model for Women's Intercultural Leadership. The pedagogy of the Women's Intercultural Leadership model includes eight pedagogical elements that are combined in a synergistic model. These elements are explained in detail, along with key theoretical foundations of the work, and the six proficiency areas that inform much of the Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership's current programming.

Acknowledgements

With deep gratitude, we thank the many women who have helped to inform, create and enact the Women's Intercultural Leadership model at the Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership (CWIL) at Saint Mary's College. Unfortunately these amazing and inspiring women are far too many to name individually, but their powerful and heart-felt contributions have made this work possible and continue to inform our efforts on a daily basis. These women include participants and planners of CWIL's Catalyst Trips, in the Women in Leader in Community Organizations project, at the Wellsprings of Wisdom Conferences, and in the praxis research group. We'd also like to offer sincere gratitude to the staff and administrators at Saint Mary's College, and to all current and past members of the CWIL leadership team.

We would like to dedicate this article to one woman in particular, Mary Boykins, who passed away on Valentine's Day of 2010. As an African-American community leader whom we came to know in her 70's, Mary was an inspirational leader and mentor who participated in many CWIL leadership programs, most particularly the Catalyst Trip. She had a broad knowledge of history and politics, as well as profound lived experiences, and she shared these freely with Saint Mary's students and other participants. One year, after a particularly powerful learning experience, the students recognized her with an "honorary degree" from Saint Mary's. Those extraordinary moments are the best expressions of the intercultural leadership development that we attempt to describe in this article. Mary was a role model to all and her legacy will live within the memories and lives of the women she touched. Our enduring love and appreciation to Mary and her family.

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Preface

From its inception, the Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership (CWIL) at Saint Mary's College has taken the position that the problems of the 21st century require leadership that purposefully seeks to be informed by and situated within the experience and lens of gender and culture. CWIL asserts that the whole of women's intercultural leadership is more than the sum of its parts: women's empowerment, intercultural competence, and various approaches to leadership. CWIL goes one step further to embrace the idea that diversity is a virtue, a strength and an aspiration. Therefore, we cultivate leadership that brings everyone to the table and builds bridges across the social barriers that continue to divide and alienate people from one another. CWIL strives to provide opportunities for women to understand that they are the next generation of leaders, whether they are in their career field or a stay-at-home mom, whether they are in professional roles or in their neighborhood.

We believe women will lead the transformational change that is necessary to strengthen our communities, create healthier individuals and organizations, and liberate our planet and our psyches from the damage we have collectively inflicted. We hope that our efforts, including our leadership programs, conferences, and journal will make a contribution to shaping those leaders.

CWIL is proud of our multi-dimensional student intercultural leadership work, which has as its highest attainment a rigorous process that culminates in an Intercultural Leadership Certificate. This program came together through the blending of an innovative Women's Intercultural Leadership model (WIL Model), described in the article that follows, with an intensive review of college-based programs around the country that focused on leadership, women's studies and cultural awareness.

What follows is a detailed description of our Women's Intercultural Leadership Model and an overview of the theory that supports it. This model is unique in that it demands a focus on women and a focus on diversity. As will be discussed, other models have offered individual components somewhat similar to our model, but none so specifically focus on women and diversity, nor do they pull together the eight pedagogical elements we offer for program design and implementation. This model is rooted in the collaborative efforts of the women who have been connected with CWIL over the last six years; thus it is unique in its content and unique in the process through which it was founded. It is our hope that this work will be useful and transformative in your own theory and practice.

Background

The Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership at Saint Mary's College was established in 2001 with a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. The goal of the center is to foster the development of intercultural knowledge and competence critical to educating the next generation of women leaders. As the CWIL mission states:

The Center for Women's Intercultural Leadership (CWIL) advances Saint Mary's College's mission of "preparing students to make a difference in the world" by empowering women to realize their call to leadership and to develop the intercultural knowledge and competence critical in today's increasingly interdependent world. (Mission and philosophy statement, n.d.)

When CWIL was established it consisted of three core areas: International and Intercultural Learning; Research and Scholarship; and Community Connections. The Community Connections area of CWIL was established to bridge the community/academic divide, and the development of the WIL Model initially grew out of this effort.

In 2004 the model began to develop as a result of the Community Connections programs which fostered unique collaborations between Saint Mary's College and the local community. These programs, including the Wellsprings of Wisdom Conference and the Catalyst Trip¹, were created by then director of Community Connections Bonnie Bazata. After several years of highly successful programming, Bonnie brought together twenty-four women who had been participants in a variety of CWIL programs and created a praxis group. The praxis group consisted of students, staff, faculty, and community women representing a wide range of ages, languages, religions, ethnicities, cultures, educational backgrounds, professions, and life experiences. The goal

of the praxis group was to identify the elements that made the CWIL community programs a success. The group identified eight key elements. These elements described how the women were developing their potential as change agents due to their experiences of transformative intercultural engagement. CWIL understands intercultural engagement to consist of two essential parts which combine to result in growth: one is interacting across the boundaries that define identities, circumscribe participation, and shape encounters, and the other is reflection on and interpretation of the complexities of those interactions.

Following the identification and elaboration of the elements by the praxis group, a team of four researchers collaborated on an in-depth qualitative research project to further examine the eight elements. Based on interviews with 37 women who had participated in Community Connections' programs, detailed information about the presence and impact of the model elements was gathered.

When the praxis group's identified elements and the qualitative interview data were coded and synthesized, a clear and powerful model for the development of Women's Intercultural Leadership emerged. CWIL began piloting training programs for women's intercultural leadership based on this model in the United States and Australia. While it should be recognized that this model was created based on the social context of the United States, participant feedback has indicated that both the national and international programs were successful.

Information gained from the praxis group, the qualitative research project, and experiences applying the model over the six years from 2003-2009 have been integrated into the current article. An overview of the theoretical foundations of the model is presented, followed by discussion of the eight pedagogical elements and the key values underlying the WIL Model. The article ends with an explanation of the six proficiency areas that were distilled from the eight pedagogical elements and are currently being used by CWIL to define women's intercultural leadership in the process of educating emerging leaders themselves.

Theoretical Foundations of the WIL Model

The WIL Model is grounded in the theoretical traditions of critical theory, critical race theory, feminist theory, and empowerment theory. According to Creswell (2007), critical theory is, "concerned with empowering human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class and gender" (p. 27). Critical researchers address historical problems such as domination and alienation, offer critiques of society, and envision new possibilities in society (Creswell, 2007). As critical theory suggests, the WIL Model is about challenging the status quo in relation to the numerous social hierarchies that exist in our society. It is about creating new communities that bridge traditional social divides and actively working to "be the change we want to see in the world" (Ghandi).

Critical race theory differs from critical theory in that it specifically focuses attention on the role of race and racism and how it shapes American society (Creswell, 2007). Critical race theorists critique the presence of color-blind racism and the notion that the United States is a meritocracy; they call for an "overt color-conscious effort to reduce racist actions in our society" (Howard-Hamilton, 2003, p. 22). Howard-Hamilton (2003), lists several key tenets of critical race theory, all of which connect directly with the WIL Model:

[Critical race theory] recognizes that racism is endemic to American life; Expresses skepticism toward dominant claims of neutrality, objectivity, color blindness, and meritocracy; Challenges ahistoricism and insists on a contextual and historical analysis of institutional policies; Insists on recognizing the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin in analyzing society; ...Works toward eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression (p. 22-23).

While the WIL Model requires bringing together groups of women who are diverse in multiple ways, it pays particular attention to the role of race and racism in our society. The history of slavery in this country has left a legacy of racial discrimination and systematic white privilege that is not only harmful to African-Americans, but to all people of color. Indeed, even white individuals are deeply harmed by the continued presence of racism and white privilege (Kendall, 2006; Spanierman, Armstrong, Poteat, & Beer, 2006). Racial

discord is at the root of many social ills in our society and intercultural leadership demands that the inequalities behind this discord be challenged and changed.

From the perspective of feminist theory, gender is understood as “a basic organizing principle” that shapes the conditions of women’s lives (Creswell, 2007). Just as critical race theory centralizes race, feminist theory centralizes gender, recognizing that “woman” is a social identity still defined as the “other” in our society (Johnson, 1997). As noted feminist scholar Patti Lather (1991) explains, the aim of research framed by feminist theory is to, “correct both the invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women’s unequal social position” (p. 71). The WIL Model addresses this position of woman as the “other” by challenging the patriarchal standards of leadership in our society and recognizing that every woman has a “leader within.” The model also claims the power of women to develop the self, build community, and engage in intercultural leadership to affect positive social change.

Empowerment theory is premised on a social conflict paradigm which asserts that because individuals hold different positions in the social hierarchy, they have different levels of control over social resources. Therefore, social problems are caused by a society’s inability to meet the needs of people at all levels of the social stratum. According to Carr (2003), helping individuals to overcome personal problems embedded in social and political positioning will not suffice without changes in the social order. The WIL Model supports this analysis and calls for people from positions of “unearned overadvantage” and “unearned underadvantage” (McIntosh, 2007) to come together in dialogue to build community and create positive social change. Such efforts can lead to necessary changes in the social order, facilitating greater equality in the control over social resources and furthering the possibility of empowerment for individuals and groups.

Carr (2003) also describes empowerment as a multilevel, cyclical, and reciprocal process. The implementation and outcomes of empowerment can occur at the individual, interpersonal, community, organizational, or institutional level, or at any combination of these (Carr, 2003; Gutierrez, 1990; Wallerstein, 2002). As will be discussed shortly, the WIL Model aligns with the multilevel and cyclical process of empowerment, embracing the ongoing process of change in the element *Embrace a Process that is Never the Same Way Twice* and privileging multilevel transformations, particularly as explained under the element *Keep your Eyes on the Prize*.

The Eight Pedagogical Elements of Women’s Intercultural Leadership

The development of women’s intercultural leadership relies on a process of internal and external transformation, framed by a commitment to cultural diversity, which motivates one/many to take action to effect positive social change. The pedagogical elements that are necessary for programs to successfully facilitate such transformations in women are detailed in the following section.

1. Recognize the Leader Within

It would be inaccurate to say that change has not occurred, that women have not entered some realms of leadership previously reserved for men. Indeed, barriers have been broken. Nancy Pelosi became the first woman Speaker of the House in 2007; women now earn 59% of master’s degrees and 48% of Ph.D’s; among 802 U.S. foundations and giving programs recently surveyed, women held 55% of the chief executive positions – including the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Women have also become college and university presidents (23%), members of congress (16%), and executive position holders in Fortune 500 companies (16%). However, most of these statistics in no way reflect gender parity. The situation is even worse for women of color, who, for example, hold only 2% of executive positions in Fortune 500 companies (Eagly & Carli). While women have made great strides in gaining officially recognized positions of leadership in our country, clearly there is still much work left to be done.

The first element of the WIL Model, *Recognize the Leader Within*, addresses not only the lack of women in officially recognized positions of power, but also the often glaring inability of our culture, and of individual women and men within our culture, to recognize and value women as leaders. At the heart of the pedagogy of *Recognize the Leader Within* is the belief that leadership is inherent in every woman. Also key is the recognition that there are internal and external barriers to women’s leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Valian, 1998). For example, the culture in which we live often teaches women not to see themselves as leaders; even

women in officially recognized positions of power struggle to name themselves as leaders (Clance, 1985). In addition, the continued existence of the glass ceiling in some industries, the presence of a 'labyrinth' women must traverse to reach leadership positions, and internalized and often unrecognized barriers such as biased gender schemas all limit the development of women leaders in the work force and beyond (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Valian, 1998).

Nevertheless, it is essential to recognize that leadership is practiced daily by women and often goes unacknowledged. It frequently happens in ways not located within a title or position. For example, women's leadership is practiced in families, churches, PTAs and community gardens. It is practiced in a wide variety of places where work gets accomplished, often quietly and without fanfare.

This element helps women to recognize and use their leader within while also valuing and supporting the contributions of others. The principles of "taking your space" and "passing the stick" (J. Campos, personal communication, October, 2002), are highly valued. The former encourages women to acknowledge their own leadership and to share their strengths; the latter involves passing on leadership roles, sharing decision making, and collaboration. Another metaphor for this type of empowerment and flexibility in the leadership process is geese flying in a V formation. When the lead goose tires and rotates back into the formation to rest, another goose takes its place at the front, thus drawing on the strength of all the birds to reach their final destination.

Researchers have supported the idea that all individuals have the potential to be leaders, but few have explicitly placed women at the center. For example, Hackman and Wageman (2007) ask how leadership models can be reframed to see all members as leaders and followers, and the pluralistic leadership model calls for the recognition of leaders who were previously unseen (Kezar, 2000). Finally, Bering (2006) and de Nijs (2006) highlight the importance of finding ways to affirm, encourage, and empower others, but there is no specific focus on the development of women's leadership or the recognition of leadership inherent to all women.

2. Begin with Diverse Women as Planners and Participants

The development of women's intercultural leadership requires that women from diverse backgrounds be involved as planners and participants from the beginning. If plans are made exclusively by women representing one social group important ideas, insights, and experiences are missed.

The goal is to bring together women who can offer many different perspectives. While differing perspectives emerge when diversity in terms of age, social class, religious background, sexual orientation, ability, and country of origin is present, particular attention should also be paid to racial diversity. Racism has been one of the deepest, longest, and most destructive forces in the United States. Our schools, churches, neighborhoods, and places of work continue to be racially divided. By connecting across racial lines, barriers can be overcome and relationships built on trust and mutual understanding can develop.

In order to build "bridging" social capital (Beugelsdijk & Smulders, n.d.) and create trusting relationships, women's intercultural leadership calls for women to move beyond token representation. With more equal numbers of diverse participants individuals feel more free to bring their cultural practices to the process—different styles of talk, dress, humor, and problem solving. For example, in terms of race it is ideal to aim for a ratio of half or more of the participants being women of color; this allows for a comfort level and balance of power otherwise not easily achieved.

In addition to working for diversity it is important to be mindful of not continuing to invite the same group of overworked leaders to represent the "African-American" or the "Latino" community. It is necessary to see the leaders present in many places in the community even though only a handful may be recognized as leaders by the mainstream culture.

Two important questions to continually ask are, "Who is present?" and, "Who is missing?." There are frequently examples of individuals and groups making decisions for people who are greatly affected by such decisions but who are not at all included in the decision-making process. This model of leadership exists on local, national and even international levels. For example, researchers Keivani and Mattingly (2007) discuss how local populations in countries such as India are often excluded from decision-making processes and left to cope with the aftermath and maintenance of development and globalization. The researchers call for local government-led inclusive leadership versus governance centered at state or national levels. A similar strategy is at the heart of the WIL Model. Individuals and groups should consider how decision making and leadership

changes when the actual stakeholders—those most directly affected by the decisions being made—are included at the decision-making table.

Some scholars and practitioners have recognized the importance of diversity in leadership development programs. While such individuals cite the benefits of having diversity present, the inclusion of strategies for achieving diversity and the importance of having diversity *from the beginning* are unique contributions of the WIL Model. For example, Cairo, Dotlich and Rhinesmith (2005) simply note the importance of having balance and diversity so that a range of solutions (in business endeavors) can be considered. Models such as the servant leadership model (Greenleaf, 1998), models in education (Hallinger, 2003) and the medical field (Bering, 2006), and leadership models in business (Covey, 2006; de Nijs, 2006) give no mention to the importance of diversity.

Other leadership models have, like the WIL Model, accentuated the importance of diversity. Kezar's (2000) pluralistic model of leadership is one of the most comprehensive models for addressing diversity. She recognizes that difference must be embraced and multiple perspectives must be acknowledged. Karim's (2003) model for developing intercultural consciousness also places diversity at the forefront of leadership development.

3. Dialogue on Power and Privilege

This element is based on the belief that meaningful communication occurs when power and status are addressed and made transparent. While talking about power and privilege does not erase it, such conversations allow for positive relationships to be built and necessary action to take place. As noted leadership scholar Margaret Wheatley (2002) explains, "...when we begin listening to each other, and when we talk about things that matter to us, the world begins to change" (p. 9). Change begins with the realization that society discriminates, giving some groups of people "unearned overadvantage" and others "unearned underadvantage" (McIntosh, 2007). As members of society, we experience either underadvantages or overadvantages, or more often both, depending on our particular social identities. Such dynamics are not only present in society at large, but also in the groups in which we are members. They usually continue without any acknowledgement and without the action steps necessary to change the unequal power dynamics.

To develop their intercultural leadership women must have the courage to dialogue about power and privilege, in all its complexity, in order to achieve meaningful communication and relationships. Such communication requires that participants from both perspectives (unearned overadvantage and unearned underadvantage) connect with one another. This is necessary because, for example, white women are often blind to the white privilege that women of color can easily see; and conversely, it is important for women of color to form trusting relationships with white women so that both groups can unite to affect positive social change. And again, while overadvantage and underadvantage exist in regard to a variety of social positionalities (i.e. class, gender, ability, and sexual orientation), it is important to acknowledge that the presence and impact of white privilege and white dominance is overwhelmingly damaging to our society. Thus, racism is an area that must be addressed.

The Women's Intercultural Leadership programs have yielded important lessons about creating spaces for dialogue on power and privilege. First, intentionality is key; barriers to participation are created in groups when the dynamics of power and privilege continue to operate covertly and go unaddressed. Deliberate efforts must be made to address these dynamics. Second, it should not be assumed that everyone's experiences are the same. Racism is different from sexism. The experiences of African-American women are different from the experiences of Latina women; and the experiences among African-American women, while sometimes similar, may also differ greatly. When taking on these difficult topics it is important to acknowledge and validate everyone's experience and to avoid assumptions. Third, individuals should take personal responsibility for what they say and do and realize that the pain, issues, and hopes are deeper, longer, and bigger than any one person's history or actions. We must trust that our commonalities will emerge once we experience respectful and open communication. Finally, it is important to remember that the historical underpinnings of such inequities cannot be dismantled simply through dialogue. People in positions of privilege should never assume that the problem has been "solved" once they've engaged in difficult dialogues. The elimination of privilege and the establishment of equality for all is an ongoing process; an ideal to be worked towards that is never in a state of completion.

4. Build Community

Our lives have meaning in the context of community; relationships are the basic building blocks of society. As noted educator James Comer (2001) explains, there is no significant learning without significant relationship. Similarly, this model element posits that there is no significant leading without significant relationship. By breaking down barriers and having honest dialogue with one another, traditional notions of power and privilege are not only challenged; powerful relationships based on real communication and genuine caring are created—and bridging social capital (Beugelsdijk & Smulders, n.d.; Dash, 2006) is built as a result.

Social capital “refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (The Informal Education, n.d.). There are two types of social capital, bridging and bonding. Bonding social capital consists of closed networks of family and friends (Beugelsdijk & Smulders, n.d.). This type of capital may have “a tendency to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups” (The Informal Education, n.d.), but it can be strong in reciprocity and solidarity. Bridging social capital refers to open networks that bridge different communities (Beugelsdijk & Smulders, n.d.). It is more inclusive and outward-looking and is useful for encompassing people across social divides. Bridging social capital provides linkages to external assets and is useful for disseminating information (The Informal Education, n.d.).

Benefits derived from social capital include conflict reduction, greater academic achievement, reduced crime levels, healthier citizens, poverty alleviation, and economic growth (Dash, 2006). Bearing these benefits in mind, the WIL Model recognizes the importance of creating social capital, particularly bridging social capital.

A first step in creating bridging social capital is recognizing that there are numerous ways in which we are similar to and connected with one another; these similarities become apparent when shared experiences are created. Rituals and stories are two tools that help create shared experiences and build community. Rituals, or “ceremonial acts,” are the shared activities and behaviors that groups engage in. Overton and Burkhardt (2000) explain that all groups are held together by rituals that bind their members together and that, “Leaders for cross-cultural partnerships are in a position to help nurture new rituals that give meaning and momentum to the new community of interest that is at the core of the common effort” (p. 226).

Storytelling, one of the oldest forms of human communication and transmission of culture, is another powerful strategy for building community. Personal stories are representative of life experiences, and it is often these life experiences which go unknown to others. Through the sharing of stories people learn from one another; stereotypes are challenged and new, more accurate information is gained. Stories not only allow for vital information to be shared, but they also foster the development of the self and of new relationships. With the disclosure of personal information, barriers begin to be broken down and new stories, new constructions of “we” that incrementally and cumulatively connect us to each other, are created.

Critical race theory utilizes counterstories to “cast doubt on existing ideas or myths held by majority group members” (Howard-Hamilton, 2003, p. 23). Counterstories are stories told by marginalized groups that represent “previously untold or different stories based on experiences that challenge the discourse and beliefs of the dominant group” (p. 23). Huber, Lopez, Malagon, Velez, and Solorzano (2008), argue that counterstorytelling can help to build community. They also note that counterstorytelling helps to challenge the status quo, empowers those at the “margins of society,” aids in the construction of new, more positive realities, and “provide[s] a context to understanding and transforming established belief systems” (p.48). Due to such powerful outcomes storytelling is a method frequently used in the implementation of the WIL Model to build community.

5. Value and Develop Sacred Space

It is difficult to ask women to share personal stories or engage in dialogue on power and privilege in spaces which do not feel safe to them. However, when a safe space is created—a space in which participants are physically comfortable and experience a sense of trust and confidentiality—personal disclosures and transformative conversations become more likely. The presence of sacred space is necessary for the development of many of the previously discussed pedagogical elements. While it facilitates dialogue on power and privilege and the building of community, it also deeply and dramatically supports the leader within.

Women are rarely afforded the opportunity to congregate solely with other women in our society. While the creation of sacred space is valued in part because of removal from the everyday presence of sexism, it is about more than the reduction of a negative, there is also the addition of a positive. Sacred space creates the

space for women to discover and share their voices and to express their inner selves in a way that does not happen in everyday contexts.

It is important that sacred space be created with intentionality. All-women spaces are not automatically sacred spaces, rather, specific steps such as setting ground rules and using techniques described under the sixth element, *Create Equity and Voice*, need to be taken to ensure the development of women's sacred space.

6. Create Equity and Voice

Creating equity and voice means being mindful of the hegemonic dynamic that can let some voices be dominant while others are excluded. Left unexamined, certain people and perspectives, because of their relationship to the larger social order, are privileged while others are overlooked. Developing women's intercultural leadership requires the use of strategies that create participation by all and that value the perspectives of all. This process of deconstructing the social hierarchy of who has a voice and who gets to participate can feel awkward and trigger unexpected emotions. However, it is a critical component that allows the other elements, like *Build Community*, to happen. As noted feminist Sheila Rowbotham (1992), states,

The sound of breaking silence makes us understand what we could not hear before. But the fact that we could not hear does not prove that no pain existed. The revolutionary must listen very carefully to the language of silence. This is particularly important for women because we come from such a long silence. (pg. 129)

CWIL relies on techniques such as those developed through Participatory Learning and Action (PLA), among others, to create equity and voice. PLA techniques have their roots in several traditions such as Paulo Freire's activist participatory research and applied anthropology (Pretty, Guijt, Thompson & Scoones, 1995). In PLA a wide range of engagement approaches are used, tapping into multiple learning styles and flattening hierarchy and power dynamics so that answers come from all members of the group. The success of the whole rests with the contribution of each person, and multiple ways for individual voices to enter the process are deliberately created. PLA moves the group beyond talking to engaging in behaviors such as physical movement, drawing, describing, and evaluating. It puts an end to passivity and creates a sense of authority and autonomy for each participant (Pretty, Guijt, Thompson & Scoones, 1995).

A second useful strategy for creating equity and voice is viewing knowledge as a cycle (J. Campos, personal communication, October, 2002). In this perspective individuals construct knowledge together; they develop and share in a process of generating, validating, analyzing, and transforming knowledge individually and collectively. This process recognizes that each person's knowledge has equal value and allows for meaningful dialogue to take place.

7. Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

The prize, or end goal, of developing women's intercultural leadership is positive social change. While there will be shifts on the individual level (as described under elements such as *Recognize the Leader Within* and *Dialogue on Power and Privilege*) the larger goal of applying this model is the creation of positive social change.

The name of this element is based on an African-American gospel song entitled, "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize," that was influential during the American Civil Rights Movement. In alignment with the historical significance of the song, this element is about recognizing that the work involved in developing women's intercultural leadership goes beyond the experiences of any one individual. The women committed to this process are taking on injustice—working for their children, their communities, and their planet.

This pedagogical element requires defining and regularly revisiting the goal(s) for positive social change. This focus on the larger whole enables individual participants to weather the bumps along the road that may result from journeying outside of one's comfort zone, encountering unfamiliar and unexpected perspectives, and dialoguing about power and privilege.

Similar to empowerment theory, developing women's intercultural leadership encompasses change on multiple levels (Carr, 2003; Gutierrez, 1990; Wallerstein, 2002). While individual change is embraced in the WIL Model, change on the group, organizational, community and/or societal levels is the ultimate goal.

Individuals must do their own work, but they must also continue to believe in the power of the group to keep their eyes on the prize and take the work to the next level to create positive social change. This is not a quick process, but one that is worth the continuous commitment required for true transformation to be achieved. As noted activist and educator Myles Horton (1990) states,

I've often said that if we could do something overnight, it's not worth doing because if it's that simple and that easy, it'll take care of itself. There'll be plenty of people who will see that it happens. Tough problems take time and you have to struggle with them. (p. 216)

8. Embrace a Process that is Never the Same Way Twice

While individuals and institutions often struggle with and resist change, the WIL model recognizes change as inevitable and embraces this occurrence as a positive rather than a negative outcome. The inevitability of change means that a process does not remain static but is continuously created and re-created as new people enter, as circumstances change, and as existing members shift and grow. This is not to suggest that chaos is embraced and a complete lack of structure exists. In fact, key underlying structures and pedagogy remain, but the ways in which the structures and pedagogy become enacted continually shift.

This element recognizes that the development of women's intercultural leadership is fundamentally different from many leadership programs that attempt to teach discrete and replicable skills sets. Certainly there are necessary skills associated with leadership in a variety of settings, but many of them are understood more as managerial skills: developing budgets, managing staff and boards, negotiating or applying ethical standards. Intercultural leadership requires an orientation that goes beyond proficiency in these types of skills. It requires competencies such as flexibility, the ability to deal with ambiguity and complexity, self-reflection, and creative adaptation. Indeed, this perspective on leadership means individuals need to be prepared for a process that is ever-changing, and, a process that will change them.

Women's intercultural leadership does not consist of a set of static skills to be transmitted outside of the context in which leadership is exercised. Rather, the development of women's intercultural leadership mirrors lessons being written about in the fields of global leadership and intercultural studies. As Turnbull (2009) states, "Global leadership may be seen as a dynamic social process and as a constantly shifting network of networks, instead of as individualized skills and competencies" (p.86). Similarly, ethnorelativism (from the field of intercultural studies) requires a state of mind in which cultures are respected, compared, and contrasted according to the perspectives of the cultures involved (Bennett, 1993). In this state of mind, one's own culture is no more central to describing and evaluating reality than any other culture.

Embracing that a process is never the same way twice is necessary given the transformational nature of the WIL Model. This transformation can happen synergistically and simultaneously across the self, relationships, the group, the process, and the outcomes. In short, as we remake the world, we remake ourselves.

Key Values Underlying the Women's Intercultural Leadership Model

While the pedagogical elements of the WIL Model are separate and unique, it is vital to understand that this is a *synergistic* model which works best when all eight elements are present. This is not a developmental or stage model of leadership in which individuals or groups pass from one stage to the next, rather the differing elements constantly inform and re-inform one another as individuals, groups, and communities change and grow.

The WIL Model also requires individuals to engage in what we refer to as *self work*. Self work requires reflection upon one's cultural and personal identities. Individuals must be willing to analyze what has shaped their current identities—for example, how their family, church, school, region and culture have influenced who they are and how they see the world.

Much research has supported the importance of a focus on the self for successful leadership development (Garmon, 2005; Hackman & Wageman, 2007; Kaplan-Leiserson, 2005). However, few scholars frame this work from the perspective of a focus on diversity. Those that do, such as Dash (2006) and Ayo (n.d.), discuss the ways in which individuals, when working with diverse others, are moved out of their comfort zones and begin to acknowledge and challenge their stereotypes. With such work, awareness is gained and new, more accurate information is learned. This focus on the self is not only important for people who hold privilege and

power, but also for those in positions of disadvantage. For example, in talking about the experiences of African-American women, Howard-Hamilton (2003) explains that, "Oppressive images are difficult to erase... when they have been reinforced over a long period," thus, "it is important that self-valuation, self-definition, and knowledge validation replace the negative images of self in the minds of these women" (p. 21-22). This type of self work, required of *all* participants, is a cornerstone of the WIL Model.

One aspect of self work is interrogating one's schemas, or theories about how the world works. Myers (2007) describes schemas as concepts or frameworks that organize and interpret information. According to Valian (1998), they are useful "mental short-cuts" that help individuals operate successfully in their daily lives. Schemas are taught or acquired from one's environment—through family, social networks, the media, and culture. While many schemas help individuals function efficiently on a daily basis, schemas can become problematic when they are based on taken-for-granted assumptions. Schemas can create a kind of "selective attention" which can skew what we see and how we process information (Valian, 1998). The self work required by the WIL Model entails understanding the notion of schemas, how they are developed, and ways in which they can be challenged and changed in order to become more accurate.

Cognitive dissonance also plays a role in self work. Cognitive dissonance is an unpleasant state that arises when individuals hold multiple beliefs or cognitions that are at odds with one another (Aronson, 2004; Skillings & Dobbins, 1991). For example, thoughts such as "our country is a meritocracy in which individuals 'get what they deserve' based on their hard work" and, "I see people of color working hard and still lacking in positions of power and economic wealth" are contrary thoughts that can arouse feelings of discomfort and anxiety. As a result, for example, white individuals will engage in strategies to ease their discomfort, such as denying or ignoring the inequities experienced by people of color (Skillings & Dobbins, 1991). The WIL Model requires individuals to acknowledge and work through such feelings of discomfort and anxiety and to challenge inaccurate schemas so that more accurate thoughts and explanations can be created. Individuals are asked to be comfortable with being uncomfortable and to enter their discomfort zone, as this is where powerful learning can take place ("Training for Change," n.d.).

In addition, the WIL Model is a *non-hierarchical* model of leadership which does not privilege one or a few individuals judged to be good leaders. This model is collaborative and views all women as potential leaders with unique skills and gifts to offer for the betterment of the world. Bonvillian (2007), defines 'hierarchy' as a, "system of social inequality in which some individuals or groups have greater power, prestige, and wealth than others" (p. 364). Social hierarchies exist throughout our culture; they are blatantly obvious in places of work (as evidenced by variance in job titles), governments, churches, community organizations and often even families. Such entities depend on (or perhaps know no other way of being than) hierarchical structure and decision making.

While we agree that the value of 'non-hierarchical' is somewhat idealistic and may be difficult to achieve given the way hierarchies are embedded through our culture, we argue fervently that it is still a value worthy striving for. We must work to un-do racial hierarchies, class hierarchies, gender hierarchies, etc. if we truly want to transform our lives, our places of work, our communities and beyond. For example, in WIL workshops participants engage in processes that give everyone a voice and don't simply privilege those who are the most confident or the most 'well-spoken' in the group. Such processes also insure that women of color contribute as much as white women, and that those from lower class backgrounds shape the processes and outcomes as much as women from middle- and upper-class backgrounds. In non-hierarchical settings the values of collaboration, consensus, equal participation and mutual understanding replace majority rule, the power of "position" to make decisions, and the silencing of the masses usually most affected by such decisions.

The WIL Model also emphasizes a *focus on diversity*. Separation and alienation as a result of difference based on race/ethnicity, religion, social class, sexual orientation, etc. are ever-present in our society. Only by breaking down the barriers that keep individuals and groups separated and by bringing everyone to the table to work together can women's intercultural leadership meaningfully develop and individuals and societies transform.

Finally, the WIL Model focuses on *women's leadership*. Traditional models of leadership are based on masculine ideals. Characteristics overwhelmingly associated with women such as collaboration, nurturance, and compassion are generally not viewed as characteristics of successful leaders. President of The White House Project, Marie Wilson (2008), asserts that women bring unique characteristics to leadership such as, "...a

tendency toward greater inclusiveness, empathy, communication up and down hierarchies, [and] a focus on broader issues.” The WIL Model recognizes such characteristics as valuable and places women at the center rather than on the periphery, questioning the assumptions of male-based leadershipⁱⁱ.

Transforming the Model for Emerging Leaders Themselves

Once the WIL Model had been developed and applied, the question the CWIL staff faced was how to adapt it to become the organizing framework for a new student-based leadership program. This program implements leadership formation as a longer-term process situated in a college setting weaving together classroom theory, intercultural experience, internships and mentoring, and a student's own vocational calling and life experience. Through much dialogue and collaboration the eight pedagogical elements were distilled into six proficiency areas that were implemented within the Intercultural Leadership Certificate program for Saint Mary's College undergraduate students. The program is a two to three year process in which students engage in community activism, study abroad, connect with community women mentors, reflect on classroom experiences and create an electronic portfolio capturing their achievements in the six proficiency areas. These areas differ from the eight pedagogical elements in that they are the areas with which *emerging leaders themselves* must focus (as opposed to the pedagogical components upon which leadership programs and facilitators must focus).

The Six Proficiency Areas of Women's Intercultural Leadership

There are six areas of proficiency that women must demonstrate in order to be certified as a Saint Mary's College intercultural leader:

1. Recognize the Leader Within
2. Articulate Your Ethical/Spiritual Center
3. Engage With & Value Diversity
4. Dialogue on Power & Privilege
5. Create Inclusive & Equitable Community
6. Make Your Difference in the World

The first two areas focus on knowledge of the self as a leader, while the third and fourth areas emphasize intercultural competence. The fifth and six areas intertwine the first two strands and bring them to bear on creating equitable processes and communities. These areas typically develop later in the process, as students move from a point of self-reflection to identifying their specific place or vocation within the larger history of social change and social responsibility.

Some of the adaptations were easier than others. While the first and fourth proficiency areas (Recognize the Leader Within and Dialogue on Power and Privilege) derive directly from the first and third elements of the pedagogy, the other proficiency areas required more dialogue and discernment. For example, since Saint Mary's is a Catholic women's college founded by the Sisters of the Holy Cross built on a 160 year legacy of women's intercultural leadership, the pedagogical element of *Value and Develop Sacred Space* was altered to move beyond a focus on women and safety to include the importance of ethical values and spiritual reverence. Like many other leadership scholars, the CWIL staff believe that true leadership must flow from a grounded ethical or spiritual center and the second proficiency area provides a focus for the articulation of that center.

While planners, teachers and facilitators must begin with diversity in their programming (pedagogical element 2), the requirement for emerging leaders is to engage with and value that diversity—as explained by the third proficiency area. The students at Saint Mary's College demonstrate this through engagement in the local community and by taking advantage of the extensive study abroad opportunities offered at the college.

The fifth proficiency area combines the fourth, sixth, and eighth pedagogical elements (*Build Community, Create Equity and Voice, and Embrace a Process that is Never the Same Way Twice*) into one area that represents how the previous four proficiency areas are put into action. The students are required to create inclusive leadership projects that demonstrate their competencies.

Finally, the sixth proficiency area captures the very same idea as the seventh pedagogical element, *Keep Your Eyes on the Prize*, only it utilizes language from the Saint Mary's College mission statement about

preparing women “to make a difference in the world”. This phrase became personalized and shifted to, “make your difference in the world,” asking each emerging leader to create her own mission statement and situate it in the context of the larger history of social change.

Conclusion

Women's intercultural leadership demands a focus on women and diversity. When groups of people are not present at the table poor decisions are made, individuals become alienated, resources and talents are underutilized, and leadership fails. As leadership scholar Ata Karim (2003) states, “Never before has the need for interculturally competent leadership been greater” (p. 34). The challenges of our world are crying out for creative new solutions, and women in particular have a critical role to play. As Pulitzer Prize winning journalists Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn (2009), note in their acclaimed book, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, “Women aren't the problem but the solution” (p. xviii). The Saint Mary's College Women's Intercultural Leadership model is a roadmap for creating this solution through the development of interculturally competent leaders, organizations, and communities. By embracing the eight pedagogical elements, key values, and six proficiency areas of women's intercultural leadership, individuals and groups can indeed “be the change we want to see in the world” (Gandhi).

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ⁱ See Cressy, E.C., Bazata, B., Evans J., Warren K., and Campos, J., (2009). The Catalyst Trip: Assessing an anti-racism intervention program. *Social Justice in Context*, 4(1), 1-23. The Catalyst Trip is a week-long journey of dialogue and transformation with the goal of creating women as agents of social change.

ⁱⁱ We are not making an essentialist argument that only women can or should lead in this way. In fact, we argue that men would absolutely benefit from training based on this model. However, since we at Saint Mary's College have only focused on the development of women as intercultural leaders we cannot currently speak to the specifics of what an intercultural leadership training program for men would look like. We certainly encourage others to adapt this model to work with men in leadership training programs.