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**Ensuring a Culturally Competent Workforce: A Professional
Development Training Model for Leadership Development in the
Public Sector of the 21st Century**

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ABSTRACT

The role of leaders and leadership has changed significantly due to rapidly changing demographics and the globalization of the world's economy. For decades the emphasis has been to increase the number of leaders with specific attributes, such as women or ethnic and racial minorities, to encourage true representation of society. Yet when these efforts have been successful culturally diverse leaders often find they are working in organizations whose culture, climate, systems, and practices do not support or value diversity. This paper looks at the role of professional development training in the development of culturally competent leadership in the public sector.

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Introduction

Increasing cultural diversity has become one of the major forces of change in the contemporary world. It is closely linked to current trends towards globalization, affecting individuals, communities, and governments at all levels. In light of current and projected demographic changes in the U.S. population and in other western nations, many public sector organizations are struggling to capitalize on the opportunities presented by a diverse work environment and fail to meet the challenges diversity often brings to an organization.

The approach repeatedly used in the public sector has been to increase the number of leaders with specific attributes, such as women or ethnic and racial minorities, to encourage a true representation of society. Yet when these efforts have been successful culturally diverse leaders often find they are working in organizations whose culture, systems, and practices do not support or value diversity. The prevailing leadership models are in effect mono-cultural ensuring that diversity is by default limited to those who at least behave like the dominant culture.

Leadership is complex and leading across cultures is more complex. Effective leadership development models and approaches must integrate theories and practices that both identify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to lead effectively in the pluralistic society of 21st Century and also assist leaders in assessing, and addressing organizational barriers that hinder diversity initiatives in the public sector. Leadership professional development training that emphasizes cultural competency provides leaders with the tools and strategies to transform the whole organization resulting in an organizational climate and culture that at once values, encourages, and celebrates diversity

and is positioned at a strategic advantage to succeed in the pluralistic world of the 21st Century.

This paper will examine the following: the two approaches to dealing with cultural differences and their impact on leadership development in the public sector; leadership development and cultural competency and the role of leadership in the development of a culturally competent workforce; the role of professional development training in creating cultural competent leaders in the public sector of the 21st Century.

Beyond Diversity to Cultural Competency

Many in the field of leadership development have used the terms diversity and cultural competency interchangeably. Consequently, the first thing we will consider is the difference between these two concepts and the impact of these two approaches on leadership development and diversity.

In his article *Beyond Diversity to Cultural Competency*, Rodney L. Brown argues that “diversity has become shorthand for a wide range of dimensions of human and social differences (class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc.)” (2001). He acknowledges that “most organizations embrace, or at least salute, the wisdom of recognizing groups that may have been overlooked, disenfranchised or discriminated against” (2001). This approach to diversity commonly referred to as diversity management, primarily focuses on staffing patterns, building awareness and tolerance to outreach efforts to diverse groups for various outcomes (2001). Although this approach may increase the number of diverse employees, and heighten individual awareness of cultural differences it does not provide them or the organizations with the knowledge and skills to work effectively across cultures increasing the risk for in a host of problems, such as inter-personal conflicts, high staff turnover, substandard customer service and even lawsuits (2001).

Milton Bennett (1986) is among those authors in the field of multicultural education to identify a framework for effective collaboration and communication across cultures. Bennett’s (1993) approach to difference is based on his *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity* which shows a progression of stages people may go through in developing intercultural competence. Bennett acknowledges the need to recognize cultural differences as the first step in the development of intercultural competence. However, Bennett argues that the mere recognition and celebration of diversity is not enough.

Success in the 21st Century is depended upon public sector leadership to move beyond "celebration" and "tolerance" to a real ability to work appropriately and effectively across cultures, and learn to leverage the creative human capital/resources present in a diverse work. Cultural Competency takes the concept of diversity deeper (Brown, 2001).

The National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University (1989) defines cultural competency as set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. This definition extends the focus from the person/individual to the organizational/system.

Helm and Richardson (1997) divides cultural competency into three levels/categories: **attitudes/beliefs** – understanding one's own cultural conditioning that affect personal/organizational beliefs, values, and behavior; **knowledge** – understanding and knowledge about the experiences, place, worldviews and history of culturally diverse individuals/groups that gives rise to culturally specific traditions, values, beliefs and behaviors; and **skills** - use of culturally appropriate behavior and communication skills.

Cultural competency allows us to identify culture-specific and culture-universal domains of competence and its relationship to leadership development and effectiveness at all levels of an organization, i.e., policy, governance, administrative, workforce, provider, communication and consumer/client.

Figure 2: Foci of cultural competence: Individual, professional and organizational

Leadership Development and Cultural Competency

Leadership has been traditionally conceptualized as an individual-level skill. However, research within the last 50 years reveals leadership to be a complex interaction between the designated leader and the social and organizational structure and environment (Speechley, 2005). This approach to leadership development values the functional assets of an organization that are rooted in the network of relationships that are core to any organization's ability to achieve its mission, goals and objectives. The concept of the

organization as a social system reveals the connection between policies, process, procedures and product to human relationships and interaction.

Figure 3: Organization as a Social System

This concept of the organization as a social system provides leaders with new insights into the multiplicities of their roles and reveals the underlying tensions that characterize the landscape of the public sector workplace.

Within this complex social system leaders are required to balance and master seemingly contradictory or paradoxical capabilities. In response to these realities models of leadership development and leadership theory have described in detail the dichotomies of leadership (e.g. Theory X vs. Theory Y; task vs. socio-emotional; participative vs. autocratic; transactional vs. transformational), neglecting efforts to explore and examine their interdependency (Quinn, 2002). Focusing on any one of these dichotomous models exclusively can lead to either/or thinking and result in a narrow and ineffective understanding of leadership and the role of leaders in an organization (Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum 1989).

Robert Quinn's (2002) model of leadership integrates the realities of the competing tensions and demands that are placed on public sector leaders, providing a knowledge and skill based approach to the opportunities and challenges of this dynamic and fluid work environment. Quinn's (2002) Competing Values Framework shows the inter-relatedness and the interdependency of contrasting and paradoxical forces/models that define the scope of leadership.

Quinn's model identifies two areas of organizational effectiveness each constructed upon a vertical and horizontal graph:

The vertical axis ranges from flexibility at the top to control at the bottom. The horizontal axis ranges from an internal organizational focus at the left to an external focus at the right. Each model fits in one of the four quadrants.

The human relation model stresses the criteria shown in the upper left quadrant: participation, openness, commitment and morale. The open systems model stresses the criteria shown in the upper right quadrant: innovation, adaptation, growth, and resource acquisition. The rational goal model stresses the

criteria shown in the lower right quadrant: direction, goal clarity, productivity, and accomplishment. The internal process model, in the lower left quadrant, stresses documentation, information management, stability and control (Denison and Quinn 1995).

Figure 4: Competing Values Framework

Quinn (2002) stresses that these opposing forces to some extent are necessary and reflect the unique dimensions of the public sector work environment. However the prevailing approaches to leadership and organizational development support valuing one over the other. Quinn (2002) argues that the failure to understand these competing values and demands can hinder leadership development and effectiveness.

Leadership development conceptualized within the context of the organization as a social system characterized by competing tensions, values and demands provides a framework for identifying not only the roles leaders play in the development of a culturally competent organization but the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to create a culturally competent workforce. As a result, culturally competent leadership development goes beyond attitudes, awareness and staffing patterns to address the whole organization and all of its complexity.

Figure 5: The Culturally Competent Organization

Cultural competency is operationalized as an organizational value, goal, and outcome that are realized throughout all areas and levels of an organization. The different domains or levels are described below:

Organizational Culture: Cultural competence is included in the mission and goals of the organization.

Governance: Cultural competence is reflected in the strategic design, goals and outcomes.

Policy and Decision Making: Cultural competence is reflected and incorporated into all policies and procedures. Cultural competent methods of decision making are used.

Service Delivery: Cultural competence is incorporated into appropriate methods and processes of service delivery.

Community Relations: Cultural competence is reflected in efforts of collaboration with diverse individuals, groups and communities and is in all methods of outreach.

Administration: The knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding cultural competence is fully understood, valued and modeled by those in leadership positions.

Personnel Practices: Personnel policies, procedures, recruitment, hiring and retention practices are culturally competent.

Communication: Employees at all levels of the organization use culturally competent methods and approaches to communicate effectively across cultures.

Culturally Competent Leadership Training Model

Professional development encompasses the whole range of learning opportunities: formal and informal learning, self-directed, seminars and conferences, workshop and workplace learning, and the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that people acquire in day-to-day experiences. It is often viewed as a necessary response to a rapidly changing environment and practices in a profession. Professional development is often viewed outside of the purview of the more rigorous traditional academic programs located at colleges and universities. Many however view professional development as an important tool in remaining current in ones profession and the continued engagement in lifelong learning. Professional development understood in this way has an important role in the continuum and cycle of adult/professional learning.

Figure 6: Continuum of Learning

All professional development programs and trainings are not a like. Brief professional development programs, such as half-day or one-day workshops structured to inform rather than to learn are unlikely to significantly change or strengthen professional knowledge and practice. Both research and current successful programs, however, have demonstrated the value of connected, sustained and intensive high-quality professional development that is based on learning competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) (Thomas R. Guskey, 2000).

Figure 7: Competency-Based Learning Model

The emergence into the 21st Century has sparked an increased interest in competency based learning. Richard A. Voorhees (2001) identifies a new paradigm emerging in education, “The interest in competencies and measuring specific learning is accelerating throughout the world. In the United States, interest in the skills needed for employment was heightened with the establishment of the National Skills Standards Board of the United States, an entity created under the Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 and the Dearing Report (1997) in the United Kingdom, captures the debate about lifelong learning and the necessity for portability of skills”.

Competency based learning (CBL) is characterized by a learner centered approach to teaching/training and learning that promotes the development of higher-order skills such as analyzing and integrating different theories, self-regulated learning, integrating the world of knowledge and the world of work, problem-solving skills, reflective skills, and application of knowledge to authentic tasks.

Professional development programs that use a competency based approach to training provide leaders with the tools and skills to meet the different needs of today and probable needs of the future (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). Most importantly the CBL model provides public sectors leaders with the knowledge and skills to analyze and measure what they have learned and if what they have learned is working.

Cultural competency within the CBL model goes beyond identifying difference to providing leaders with the knowledge and skills to construct an organizational climate and culture that capitalizes on the innovative and creative initiatives diversity brings to a work environment.

Case Example: Certified Public Manager Program of Illinois

The Illinois Labor Market Review indicated, (2004) “The 2000 Census provides a picture of the challenges Illinois employers will face in the coming years. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Illinois labor force is getting older and more diversified. While diversity in itself allows the employer to utilize the talents of a variety of people, the workforce may not be prepared to meet the requirements of a technology-laden and diverse workplace”.

Figure 8: Illinois 2005 Demographics

The Certified Public Manager Program of Illinois is a competency based professional development program that prepares public managers for the 21st Century. Cultural competency is identified as a core area of study and skill development integrated across the program curriculum.

Brief History of the Certified Public Manger Programs

The Certified Public Manager Program was founded in Georgia in 1979 and was subsequently endorsed by other states as a model for training and developing professional public managers. The Georgia program grew out of informal meetings between the University of Georgia's Institute of Government, the Center for Continuing Education and the Training and Staff Development Divisions of the Georgia State Merit System of Personnel Management. Kenneth Henning, who is considered the father of the CPM program, championed the program. The program was modeled after the Certified Public Accountant program. The CPM program was designed as a professional training program, not as an academic program. With its focus on public management, it was designed to provide practical, job-related training to improve the practice of public management (.

National Certified Public Manager Consortium

The original members in the Consortium included Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, North Carolina and Vermont. The aim of the Consortium was to establish standards for state CPM programs and to serve as a review and accrediting agent. The Consortium currently has members who are the academic representatives of the 27 states that have Certified Public Manager programs.

The Certified Public Manager Program of Illinois Program Description

The Certified Public Manager Program of Illinois (CPMPI) began an active member of the National Certified Public Manager Consortium in September 2006. Like CPM programs in other states, it recognizes the public management profession and its unique demands and challenges as well as your professional

commitment and achievement.

Program Requirements

The Certified Public Manager Program of Illinois (CPMPI) consists of 300 hours in three levels. Most of the classes are one day or 10 hours organized as followed: two hours of reading materials and activities required **prior** to all trainings, facilitated online; two hours of reading materials and activities required **post** training workshops, facilitated online; six hours of training instruction. The CPMPI has three levels. The Candidates must complete all levels to be certified. Level III is open only to those individuals who have completed Levels I and II. The requirements are:

Level I: Effective Supervision (62 Hours or 6 Training Days)

Begin with the class 100 Leadership and Management: A Self Assessment, which must be taken during the first year after enrollment. This class gives participants both an understanding of their strengths as a manager and an overview of the program. As class requirement candidates complete a professional development plan that will guide them in through their CPM training. At the end of level I candidates complete a written project or a comprehensive examination. This project/paper demonstrates their ability to apply supervisory concepts in a work situation. Upon completion of Level I candidates receive a certificate in Effective Supervision.

Level II: Core Competencies: Effective Management Training

(70 Hours or 7 Training Days) – Candidates must complete seven required core competency area trainings and Level II Core Competency Electives (144 or 14 Training Days). At the end of their Level II coursework candidate complete a take-home review demonstrating what they have learned.

Level III: Leadership Symposium (24 Hours or 2 Training Days)

– The Leadership Symposium incorporates knowledge gained from previous training and provides candidates with the opportunity to present their Capstone Projects.

Certified Public Manager Program of Illinois Model and Structure

Certified Public Manager Program of Illinois (CPMPI) incorporates Competency-Based Learning (CBL) approach to teaching and learning. This approach to professional development is designed to provide the public manager professional with the

essential and core knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to a successful public manager in the 21st century.

Competency-Based Learning or CBL is a learner-centered approach to professional development training focusing on the standards of performance crucial to being an effective manager in the public sector workplace. CPMPI Competency-Based Learning is guided by four basic principles:

- 1 **Validation:** Central to CBL is the inclusion of existing knowledge and skill sets emerging and seasoned public managers bring to the learning process and environment.
- 2 **Preparation:** CBL focuses on those knowledge, skills and attitudes core to the public manager professional of the 21st century.
- 3 **Reflection:** CBL facilitates the active process of witnessing one's own learning process in order to learn from and through the experience.
- 4 **Integration:** CBL captures and connects learning to authentic work experiences, creating usable and relevant knowledge that is a resource for growth and development both in the classroom and throughout professional life.

Certified Public Manager Program of Illinois Eight Core Competencies

The CPMPI has eight core competency areas. They are:

- 1 **Ethics and Leadership:** The knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding: the importance of reflective practice in leadership development; understanding the importance of leadership in the development and articulation of organizational vision; understanding the role of leadership in the development of an ethical organizational climate and culture; the importance of ethical standards in leadership; the nature of effective leadership in the public sector; public sector leadership in the 21st Century.
- 2 **Effective Supervision:** The knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding: staff's understanding of what is expected of them; staff performing their work effectively and efficiently; staff understanding how their role contributes to the overall performance and success of their organization; staff understanding the policies and procedures that govern their employment position and the workplace; access to systems and resources that support staff in their work; ensuring staff are treated fairly and equitable; building a cohesive, productive and effective work team.

- 3 **Cultural Competency:** The knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding: the integration of cultural knowledge into the mission, vision, values, goals and practice methods of a system, program/organization, and its professionals; ways staff can work effectively in cross cultural teams and situations; the integration of cultural knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific practices, procedures and policies applied to appropriate cultural settings and situations; the creation of a culturally inclusive workplace environment and culture; building and sustaining effective partnerships with diverse communities and groups.
- 4 **Building Effective Partnerships:** The knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding: the methods and strategies of building effective partnerships internally and externally; the importance of a shared vision for the partnership and setting clear expectations for what both partners want to achieve; understanding the process and structure of collaboration; and, the development of systems to monitor the progress of the partnerships relative to organizational objectives.
- 5 **Human Resource Management: Productivity and Quality Improvement:** The knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding: understanding the relationship between the value an organization's places upon its human capital/resources to the results an organization is working to achieve; aligning the primary functions of HR: recruiting/hiring and training the best employees, productivity and performance issues, personnel and management practices connection with various regulations, to organizational vision, mission, and success.
- 6 **Program/Project Management: Problem Analysis and Problem Solving** The knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding: planning, organizing, staffing, managing, and leading programs or projects from start to finish; program design and development; the development of program/project budgets and the ways costs are tracked for programs and specific projects; how to use indicators and established instruments to document program performance and outcomes.
- 7 **Organizational Management** The knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding: the processes, methods and structures that improve organizational effectiveness and capability; understanding the relationship among organizational vision, mission and purpose, organizational climate, culture and values, strategic planning, and

employee performance and productivity to organizational success and achievement.

- 8 **Public Policy and Administration:** The knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding: the body of laws, regulations, decisions and actions of government that impact a public sector organization's mission, purpose, and function; understanding the meaning and purpose of government, bureaucracy, budgets, governance, and public affairs.

The core competencies areas exemplify the recognized knowledge, skills, and standards of performance essential to be an effective manager in the public sector workplace. These core competencies are the cornerstones for the CPMPI course curriculum. All course offerings have identified competency areas that inform the development of the learning objectives for each course. Course performance is evaluated and assessed relative to the identified knowledge, skills, and attitudes of each core competency, making explicit the standards for achievement.

Figure 9: Public Manager Core Competencies

The core competencies are integrated and incorporated across the CPMPI program curriculum creating a scaffold and connected learning environment.

Summary and Conclusions

Although the recognition of diversity in the workplace is widely viewed as good business the implication for leaders and leadership development is much more challenging and far more interesting. Culturally competent leadership development provides public sector leaders with a framework to understand culture as a construct and the skills to internally and external work effectively to build organizations that meet the needs of our emerging global society.

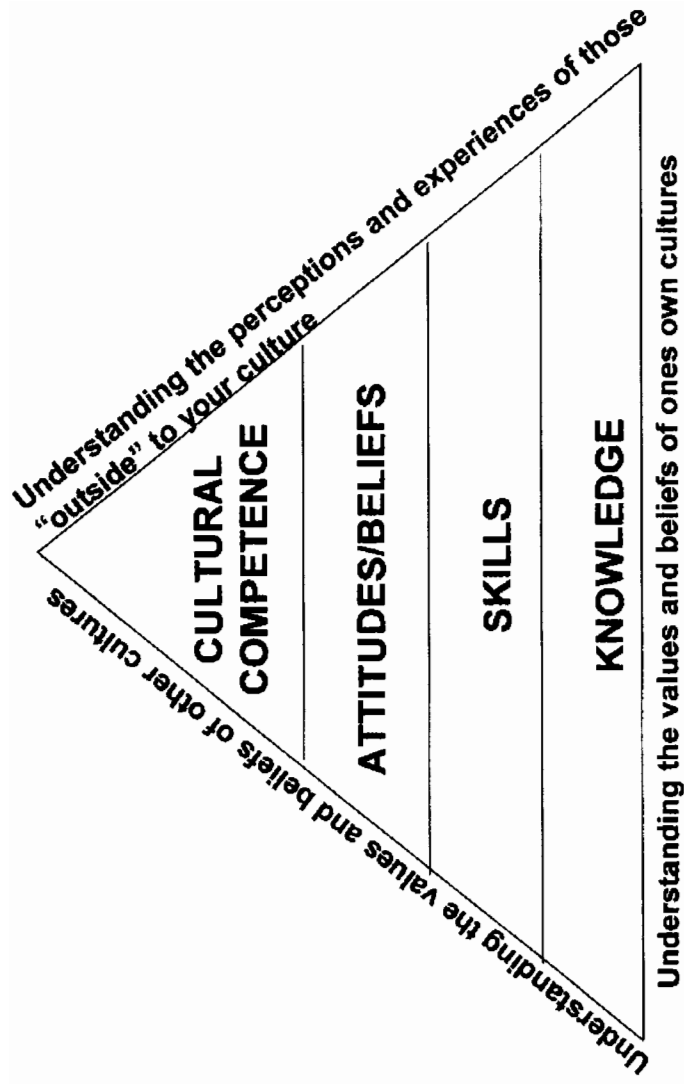


Figure 1: Three levels/categories of cultural competence

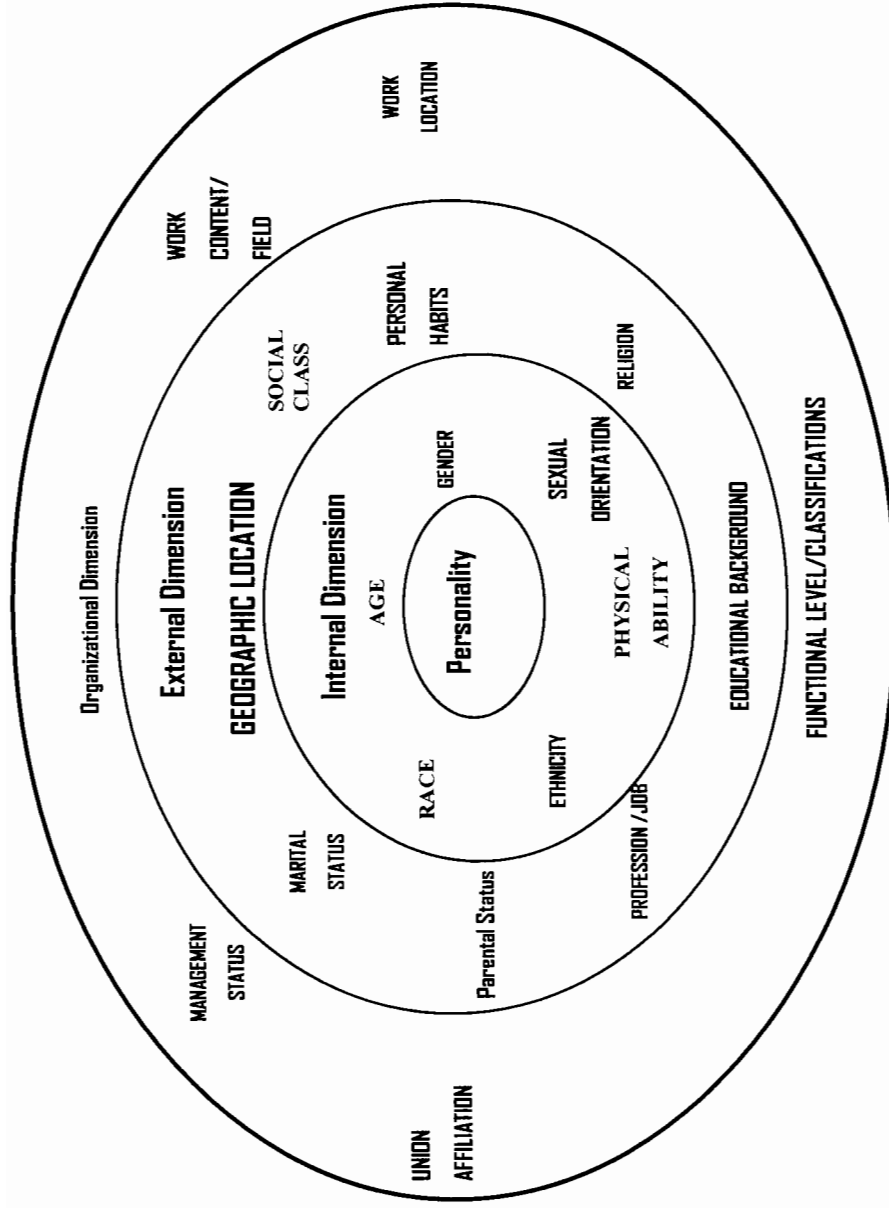


Figure 2: Foci of cultural competence: Individual, professional, and organizational

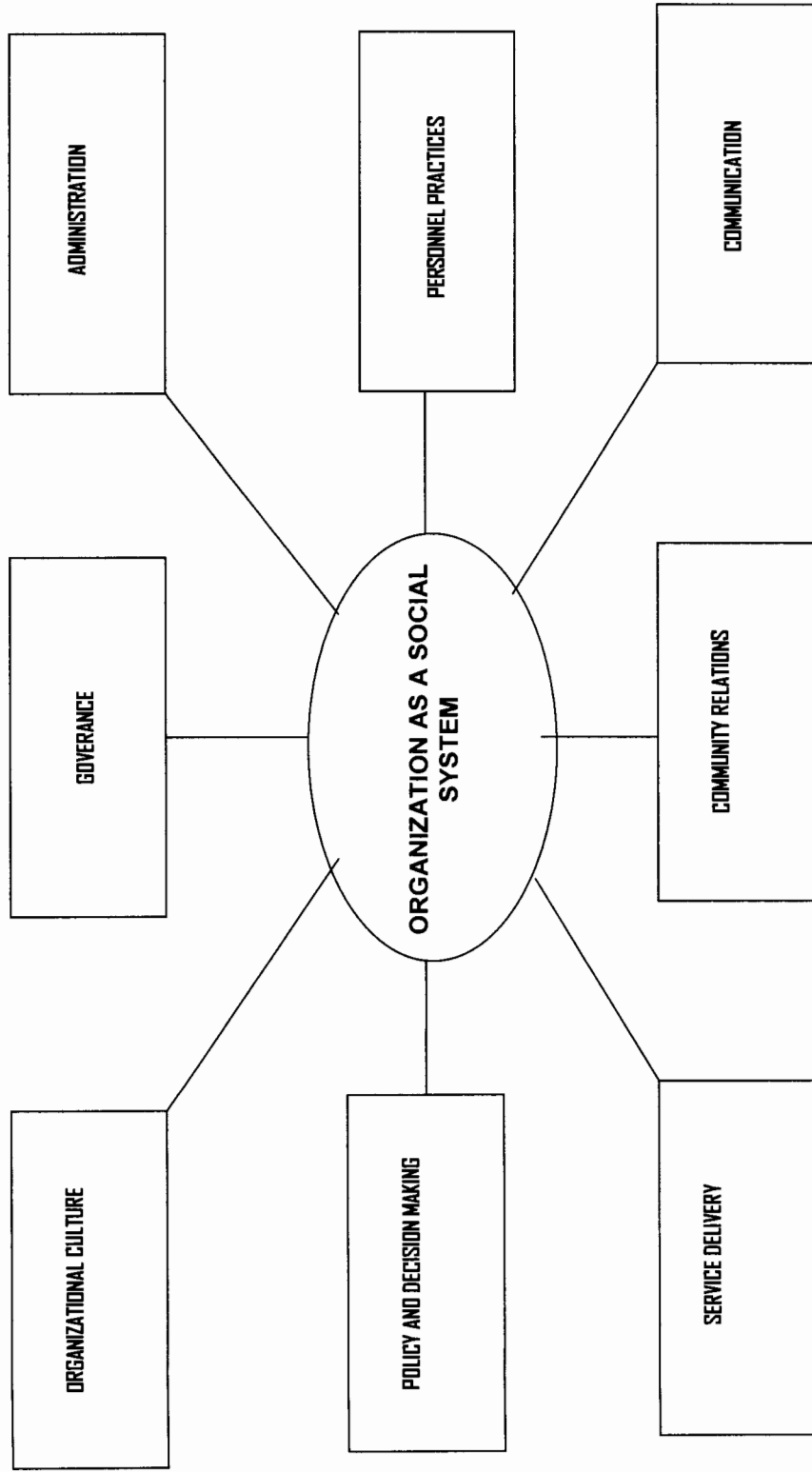


Figure: Organization as a Social System

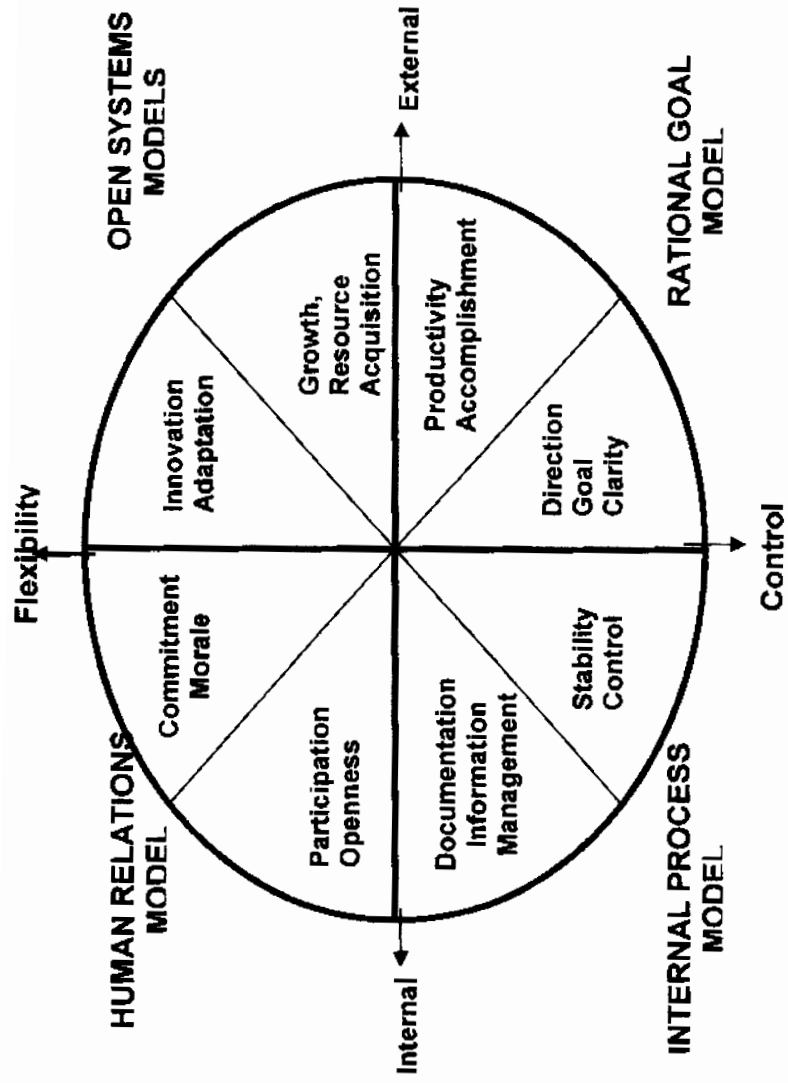


Figure 4: Competing Values Framework

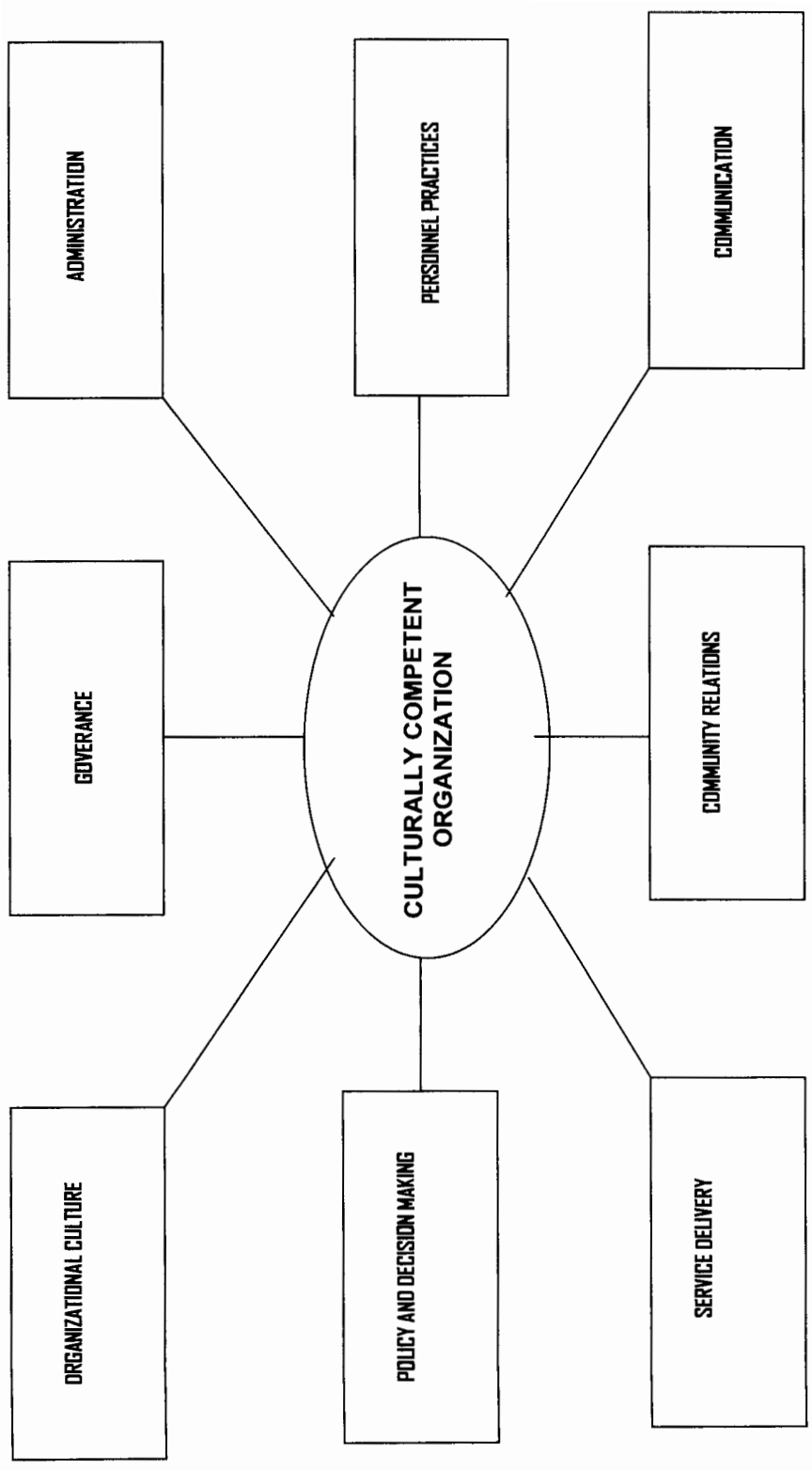


Figure 5: the Culturally Competent Organization

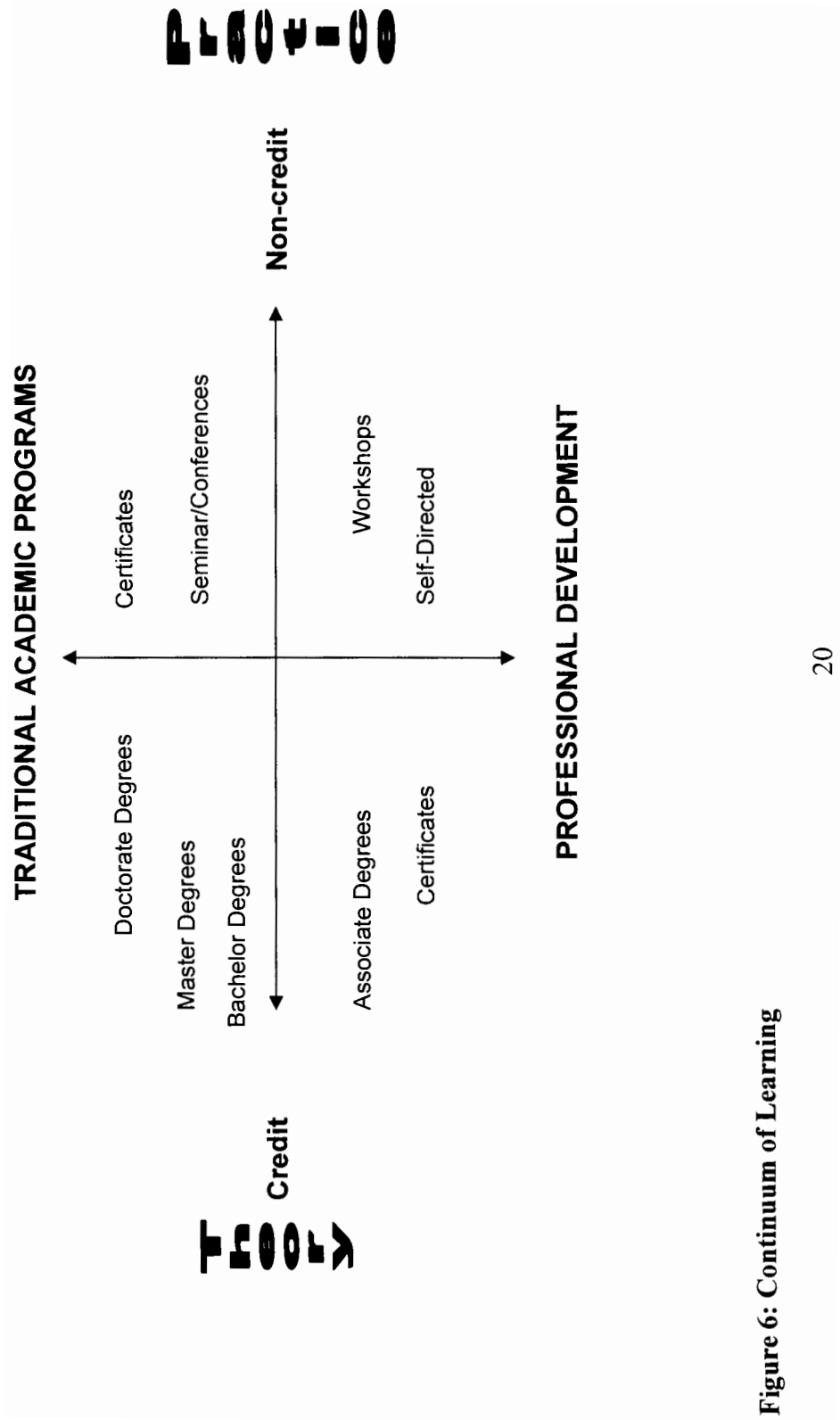
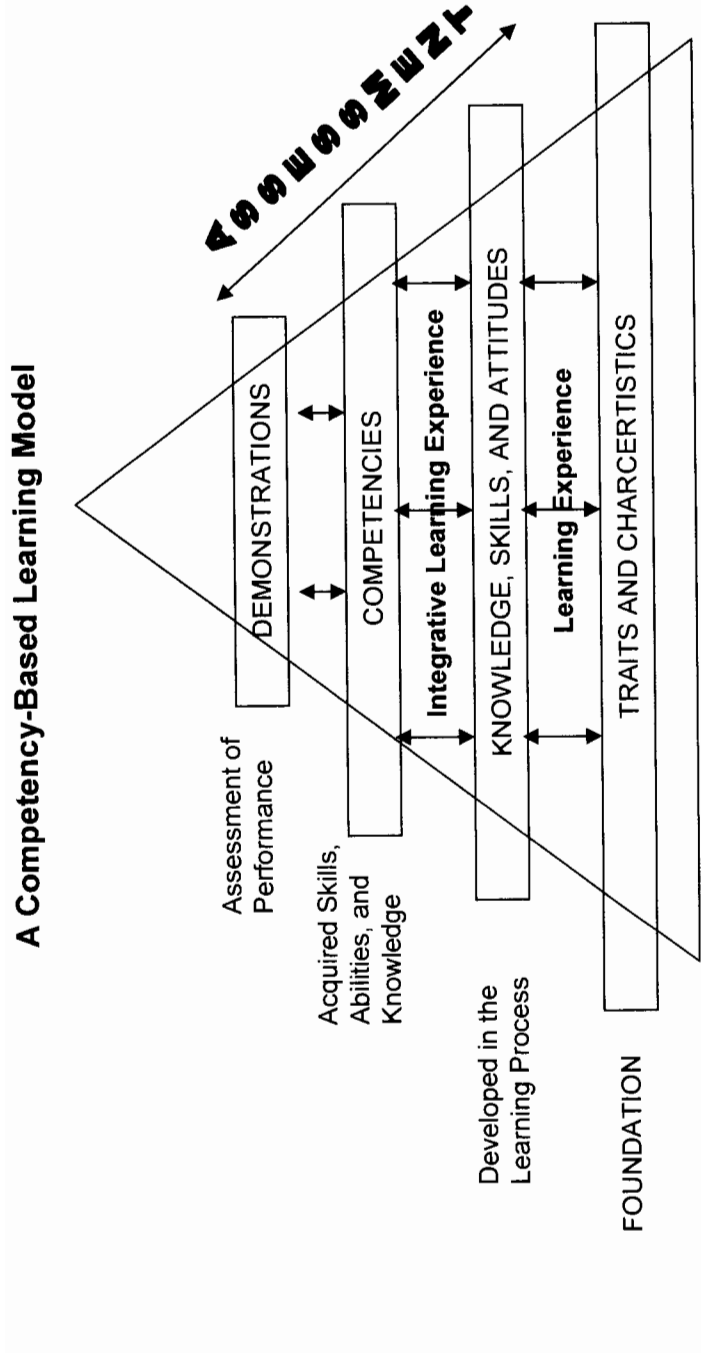


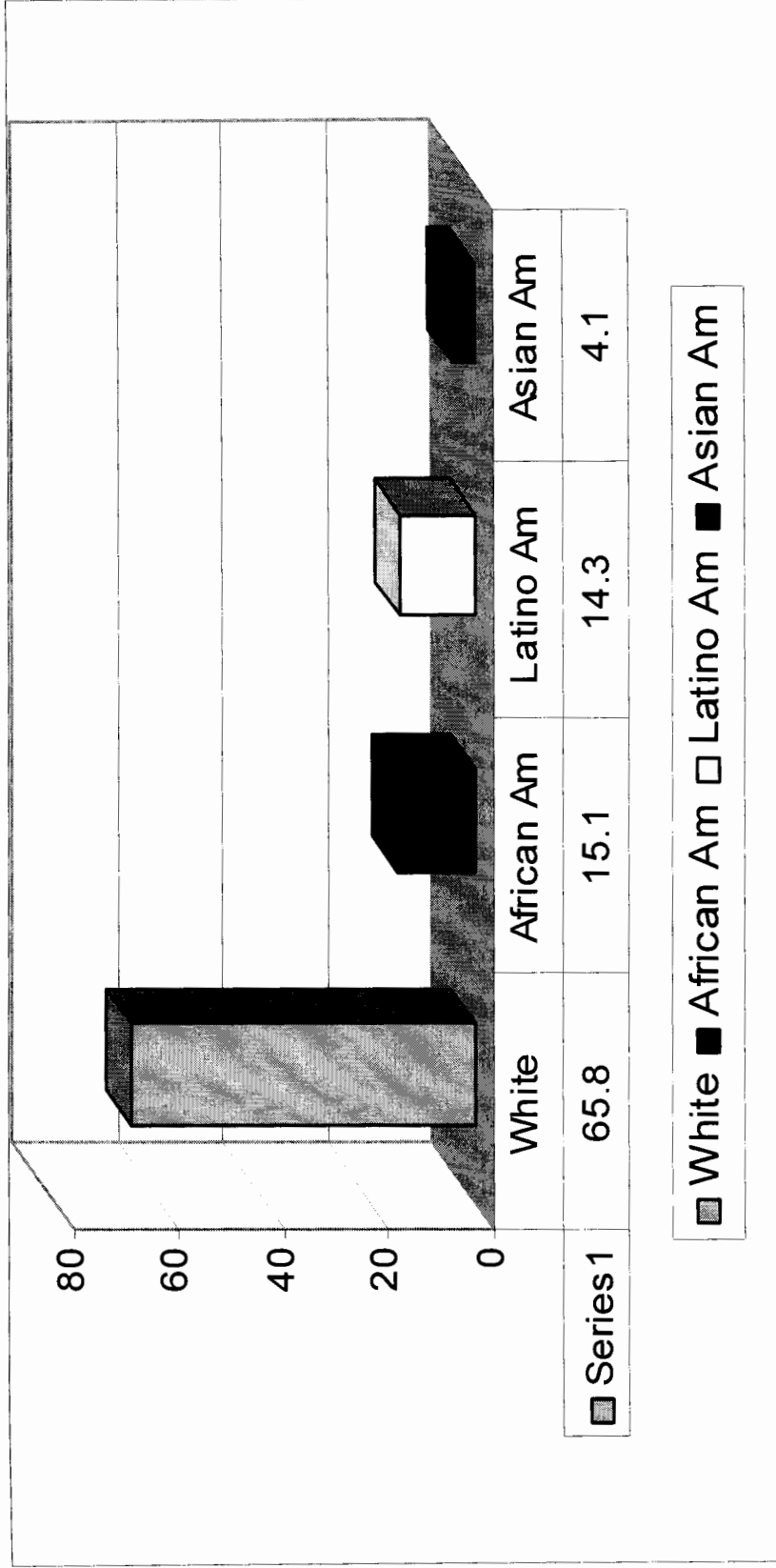
Figure 6: Continuum of Learning



Source: U.S. Department of Education, 2001.

Figure 7: Competency-Based Learning Model

2005 ILLINOIS CENSUS



<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/17000.html>

Figure 8: Illinois 2005 Demographics

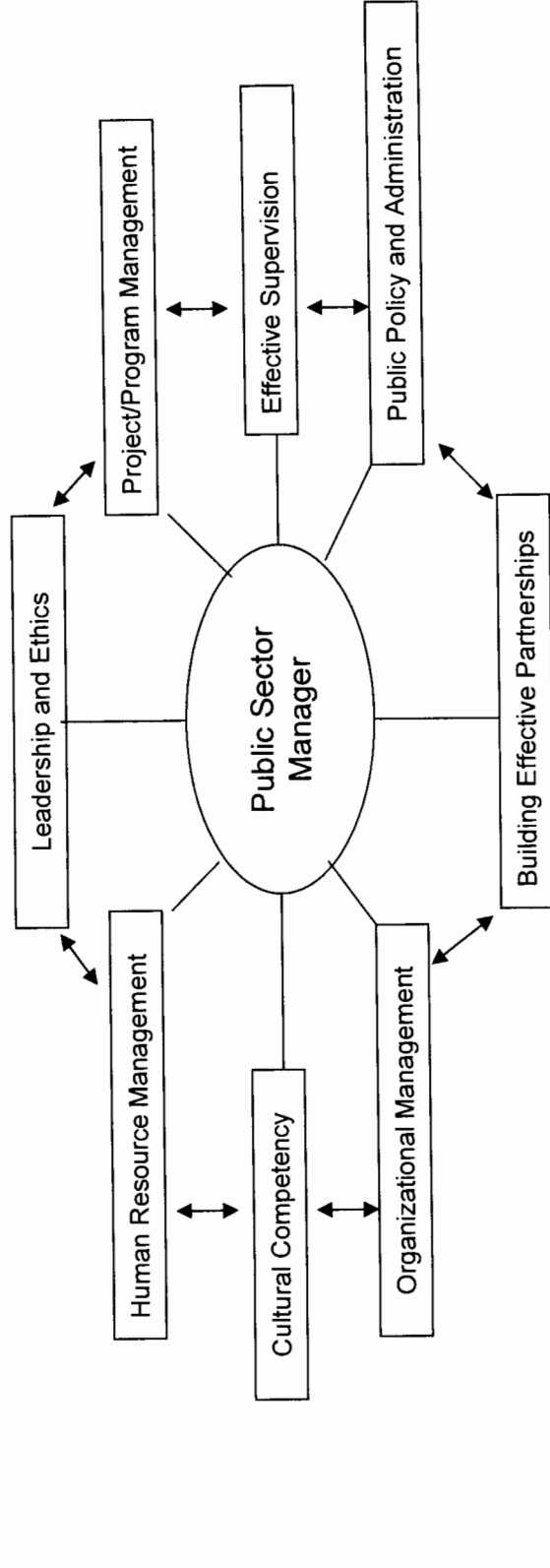


Figure 9: Public Manager Core Competencies

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