

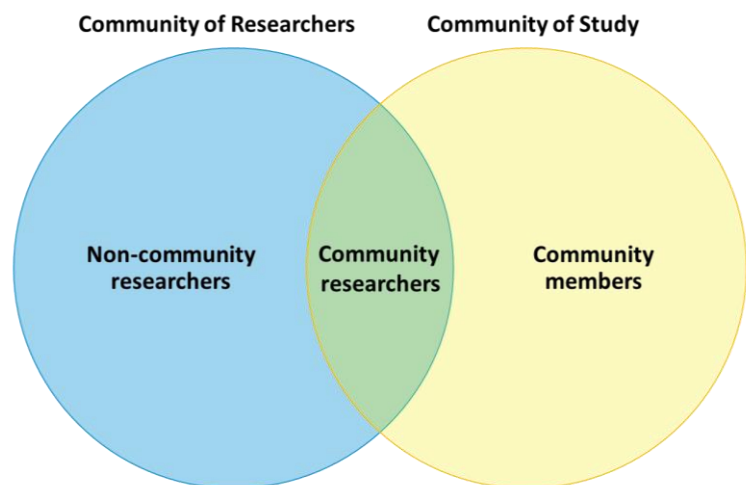
Community Engagement Continuum

Including members of the community in the research process (during development of a conceptual framework and in the execution of a research study) can be an effective strategy for including diverse perspectives, empowering community voices, and encouraging equitable decision making in the design and execution of research. **Researchers interested in creating research teams and designs and procedures that are diverse, equitable, and inclusive can use the Community Engagement Continuum (Exhibit 2) for improved community engagement to reflect on how well the community they are interested in studying (community of study) is engaged in the design and execution of research.**

Exhibit 1. Description of the Groups or Individuals Involved in the Design and Execution of Research

The continuum refers to the following groups:

- **Community of researchers:** Group of individuals with advanced training and adequate experience to conduct research (herein referred to as researchers)
- **Community of study:** Group of individuals being studied with shared characteristics or experiences
- **Non-community researchers:** Scholars who *are not* members of the community of study
- **Community researchers:** Scholars who are members of the community of study
- **Community members:** Individuals from the community of study¹



¹ It is also important to note that an individual can belong to multiple communities. A community can be defined by different factors, such as roles (e.g., teachers, students), personal or group characteristics (age, gender, race/ethnicity, language, disability, state of residency), or experiences (e.g., cohort, participants in professional development courses). For example, for an education research project on schools, a community can be defined as the school community, consisting of school administrators, teachers, students, and parents/caregivers.

Points to consider. Researchers can be members of the community of study (i.e., community researcher) or non-members of the community of study (i.e., non-community researcher). Both types of researchers bring their own positionality and bias to the work. Researchers who are from the community of study (community researchers) may have the advantage of knowing, understanding, and engaging with the community of study in ways that are different from the ways of researchers who are non-members of the community (non-community researchers). In both cases, intentionally engaging community members as the mechanism for attending to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) can increase the relevance, quality, and use of the knowledge generated from research. It should also be noted that the overall approach to incorporating DEI into a research project should be framed from asset-based and appreciative inquiry approaches to avoid deficit-based language, thinking, and outcomes regarding the community of study.

Questions to complete before reviewing the continuum. Prior to reviewing the Community Engagement Continuum, answer the following questions about your current perspectives on who should be engaged in the research design and execution process and who should benefit from the research you are currently conducting or that you expect to conduct:

1. What do you hope to learn from the research? Whose voices (e.g., members of community of study, community researchers, non-community researchers) are engaged in the research design and execution? How might their perspectives influence decisions related to research design and execution?
2. What counts as knowledge? Is lived experience expertise? Who gets to decide what knowledge is valid?
3. What are your responsibilities for sharing this knowledge? Who can or will have access to the knowledge generated from your research? What language(s) and reading level(s) will the research be published in?

Exhibit 2. Community Engagement Continuum

Components	No engagement	Some engagement	More engagement
Overall	Community members are not engaged in the leadership, design, or execution of research. Researcher(s) make assumptions about how to create diverse, equitable, and inclusive research teams and research designs. Research procedures are not validated and are unchallenged.	Community members are consulted about <i>discrete</i> components of the research design and execution. Researcher(s) make limited assumptions about how to create diverse, equitable, and inclusive research teams and research designs. Research procedures are validated and challenged in a way dictated by the researcher(s).	Community members with relevant interest, knowledge, and/or skills actively engage in the leadership, design, and execution of research. Researcher(s) make few to no assumptions about how to create diverse, equitable, and inclusive research teams and research designs. Research procedures are regularly challenged and discussed by all members of the team.
Team Composition	Researcher(s) do not include community members as part of the research project team.	Researcher(s) consult with community members (e.g., advisory board) on how to design and execute the research project.	Researcher(s) include community members with relevant experience and skills (i.e., community scholars) to serve in a leadership role, such as principal investigator, co-principal investigator, advisor, expert, or other key project team position. Researcher(s) hire and train community members interested in the profession to conduct research and, in time, take up leadership roles.
Literature Review	Researcher(s) include only information from traditional publishing and distribution channels in the literature review. Gray literature (e.g., policy documents, working papers, newsletters) and voices from the community (both scholarship and community ways of knowing, such as storytelling and knowledge from trusted community members) are not considered as part of the literature review.	Researcher(s) include some information from traditional publishing and distribution channels and incorporate research from community researchers and/or gray literature in the literature review.	Researcher(s) consistently incorporate community voices to inform literature review. Researcher(s) include information from traditional publishing and distribution channels and incorporate research from community researchers and/or gray literature in the literature review.

Components	No engagement	Some engagement	More engagement
Research Questions (and Outcomes Examined)	<p>Researcher(s) who are unaware of community priorities, culture and values, develop research questions independent of community voices.</p>	<p>Researcher(s) who are aware and knowledgeable of community priorities, culture, and values develop research questions.</p> <p>Researcher(s) who are unaware of community priorities, cultures, and values make an effort to understand context and nuances of the community and develop research questions.</p> <p>Researcher(s) who are unaware of community priorities, cultures, and values consult with community researchers and/or community members to review proposed research questions.</p>	<p>Researcher(s) and community members co-design research questions that reflect the community's priorities, culture, and values.</p>
Theory of Change/ Logic Models	<p>Researcher(s) who are unaware of community priorities, culture, and values develop the theory of change/logic model independent of community voices.</p>	<p>Researcher(s) who are aware and knowledgeable of community priorities, culture, and values develop the theory of change/logic model.</p> <p>Researcher(s) who are unaware of community priorities, culture, and values ask community scholars or community members to review the validity of the theory of change/logic model designed by the researcher(s).</p>	<p>Researcher(s) and community members co-develop the theory of change/logic model to ensure that it is culturally and linguistically sensitive.</p>
Data Collection Methods	<p>Researcher(s) select the methods that they are familiar with or that they consider appropriate or well suited for the research. Researcher(s) do not consider alternative methods of information and data gathering—even methods that would be appropriate or preferred by the community of study.</p> <p>Researcher(s) treat participants from the community as passive subjects of research.</p>	<p>Researcher(s) consult with community members about appropriate and preferred ways of collecting data that are community appropriate and culturally and linguistically sensitive (e.g., oral histories or traditions). Community perspectives, comfort, and needs inform researcher(s)' selection of methods.</p> <p>Researcher(s) treat participants from the community as subjects to consult with on the research.</p>	<p>Researcher(s) and community members review traditional methods (e.g., surveys, focus groups) and alternative methods of information and data gathering that would be appropriate for the community of study (e.g., storywork; [Archibald, 2008], onto-axiologies [Wilson, 2008], and other indigenous research methods [Russell-Mundine, 2012]).</p> <p>In partnership, researcher(s) and community members select the methods that best attend to community values,</p>

Components	No engagement	Some engagement	More engagement
		Researcher(s) consult with community members on how to recruit participants from the community of study.	culture, and priorities, as well as research project goals. Researcher(s) hire community members as project staff who lead or co-lead the designing and execution of recruitment, sampling, and data collection plans.
Instrument Design	Researcher(s) design the instrument (e.g., survey, interview protocol) independent of community voices.	Researcher(s) ask community members to review the validity of instruments designed by the researcher(s).	Researcher(s) and community members co-design instruments that are culturally and linguistically sensitive and reflect community values and priorities.
Analysis and Interpretation	Researcher(s) design the analysis plan (e.g., coding rubric, analytic model) independent of community voices. Researcher(s) interpret results independent of community voices.	Researcher(s) ask community members to review their analysis plan (e.g., coding rubric, variables included in the analytic model). Researcher(s) ask community members to review their interpretation of the results.	Researcher(s) and community members co-design the analysis plan (e.g., coding rubric, variables included in the analytic model). Researcher(s) and community members <i>engage</i> in collective sense making of results and <i>collectively</i> interpret results in culturally and linguistically competent ways.
Dissemination	Researcher(s) prioritize creating products for traditional research publication and distribution channels that are typically less likely to be accessed by non-research communities. Researcher(s) do not create products for the community being studied. Researcher(s) do not engage community members in the dissemination of research results or products. Researcher(s) share research results with only individuals the researcher(s) consider important or worthy of knowing the research.	Researcher(s) prioritize development of products to communicate relevant information about the research project (e.g., plans, progress, results, implications) that <i>they believe would be useful</i> to the community being studied. Researcher(s) invite community members to review products for relevance, value or use, readability, and understandability. Researcher(s) consult with community members about <i>what</i> aspects of the research to disseminate and <i>how</i> to disseminate research to the community of study. Researcher(s) share results with select groups—both within and outside of the community of study.	Together, researcher(s) and community members determine the most appropriate types of products to develop (e.g., model lesson plans, brief) that would be most beneficial to the community of study. Together, researcher(s) and community members decide on the best outreach method (e.g., email, social media, conversation, community meetings) to reach the community of study. Researcher(s) and community members are actively engaged in disseminating results and products—both within and outside of the community of study.

Note. Community ways of knowing: storytelling, knowledge from trusted community members, and so forth. References: Archibald, J. (2008). Indigenous storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit. Vancouver: UBC Press; Wilson, S. (2008). Research is Ceremony. Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, and Russell-Mundine, 2012, “Reflexivity in Indigenous Research: Reframing and Decolonizing Research?” *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 19(1): 85-90.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Definitions

1. **Diversity**² is about differences and similarities that define us as human beings and unique life and community experiences that can include gender, class, age, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national identity, language identity, gender identity, religion, disability status, veteran status, and diversity of thought and approach. The broad interpretation of diversity accounts for each individual's unique life and community experiences.
4. **Equity**³ is about fairness; it ensures that each person gets what they need to thrive. It is about taking deliberate actions to remove barriers and obstacles that hinder overall well-being; it is about having policies, practices, and procedures that are informed by cultural and linguistic competence to promote and facilitate positive outcomes for all.
5. **Inclusion**⁴ is an environment (e.g., learning, work) that benefits from an individual's (e.g., student's or staff's or research participant's) diversity of ideas, knowledge, and experiences and a culture that engages everyone and seeks equitable contributions from and opportunities for all.
6. **Linguistic competence**^{5,6} is the capacity of an organization and its personnel to communicate effectively and convey information in a manner that is easily understood by diverse audiences, including persons of limited English proficiency, individuals who have low literacy skills or are not literate, and individuals with disabilities.
7. **Cultural competence**⁷ is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that (a) come together in a system or agency or among professionals and (b) foster improved effectiveness in cross-cultural situations.

² Martinez, K. J., Francis, K. B., & Villalta, M. L. (2018). *Culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for projects, research, and operations (CLAS PRO)*. American Institutes for Research.

³ Martinez, K. J., Francis, K. B., & Villalta, M. L. (2018). *Culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for projects, research, and operations (CLAS PRO)*. American Institutes for Research.

⁴ Martinez, K. J., Francis, K. B., & Villalta, M. L. (2018). *Culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for projects, research, and operations (CLAS PRO)*. American Institutes for Research.

⁵ Isaacs, M., & Benjamin, M. (1991). *Towards a culturally competent system of care: Volume II: Programs which utilize culturally competent principles*. CASSP Technical Assistance Center, Center for Child Health and Mental Health Policy, Georgetown University Child Development Center.

⁶ Goode, T., & Jones, W. (2004). *Definition of linguistic competence*. Georgetown Center for Child and Human Development. <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/Definition%20of%20Linguistic%20Competence.pdf>

⁷ Cross, T., Bazron, B., Dennis, K., & Isaacs, M. (1989). *Towards a culturally competent system of care: A monograph on effective services for minority children who are severely emotionally disturbed*. CASSP Technical Assistance Center, Georgetown University Child Development Center. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED330171>