
THE CULTURAL WEALTH MODEL SUMMARIZED

Tara Yosso's six-part *Cultural Wealth Model* includes six types of capital that educational leaders may use to frame their interactions with students. This may be particularly useful for educators committed to increasing the number of non-traditional students pursuing higher education to develop the self-empowerment skills that will stay with them beyond their college experience.

The six forms of cultural capital are:

1. **aspirational,**
2. **linguistic,**
3. **familial,**
4. **social,**
5. **navigational,** and
6. **resistance.**

Yosso argues that all forms of capital can be used to empower individuals. Yosso designed this model to **capture the talents, strengths and experiences that students of color bring with them to their college environment.**

The *Cultural Wealth Model* represents a framework to understand how students of color access and experience college from a strengths-based perspective. Below we summarize Yosso's definition of each form of capital and pose questions to consider in determining how a program, school, college, or other institution can promote each specific type of capital.

Aspirational

Aspirational capital is defined by Yosso as the "hopes and dreams" students have. She explains that African American and Latina/o students and their families continue to have high educational aspirations despite persistent education inequities. Questions to consider:

- How are we supporting the maintenance and growth of students' aspirations?
- What assumptions do we have about our students' aspirations?

Linguistic

Linguistic capital refers to the various language and communication skills students bring with them to their college environment. Yosso further defines this form of capital by discussing the role of storytelling, particularly for students of color. She argues that because storytelling is a part of students' lives before they arrive on college campuses, they bring with them "skills [that] may include memorization, attention to detail, dramatic pauses, comedic timing, facial affect, vocal tone, volume, rhythm and rhyme." (p. 79). These are all skills that instructors and student affairs staff can use as a solid foundation for academic success.

Questions to consider:

- How are we supporting the language and communication strengths of our students?
- To what degree do courses utilize inclusive pedagogical practices?

Familial

Familial capital refers to the social and personal human resources students have in their precollege environment, drawn from their extended familial and community networks. Yosso explains that students' pre-college experiences within a communal environment come with knowledge that campuses can help students leverage into positive experiences in college. Consider:

- How do we recognize and help students draw on wisdom, values and stories from their home communities?
- How do we create environments that honor and invite families to participate?

Social

Social capital is a form of capital that Yosso defines as students' "peers and other social contacts" and emphasizes how students utilize these contacts to gain access to college and navigate other social institutions. Questions to consider:

- How do we help students stay connected to the communities and individuals instrumental in their previous educational success?
- How do we engage with likely individuals and community-based organizations about admissions and selection processes and the types of supports successful students need?

Navigational

Navigational capital refers to students' skills and abilities to navigate "social institutions," including educational spaces. Yosso further explains that students' navigational capital empowers them to maneuver within unsupportive or hostile environments. Questions to consider are:

- How do we help students navigate our institutions? Interactions with teachers/faculty? Interactions with student-support staff? Their peers?
- How willing are we to acknowledge that our institutions, both their structures and cultures, have a history of, and may still in many ways be unsupportive and/or hostile to our students and their communities?

Resistance

Resistance capital has its foundations in the experiences of communities of color in securing equal rights and collective freedom. According to Yosso, the sources of this form of capital come from parents, community members and an historical legacy of engaging in social justice. This historical legacy of resistance leaves students of color particularly well-positioned to leverage their higher education training to enter society prepared to solve challenging problems regarding equitable health, educational and other social outcomes. Questions to consider are:

- How do we support students who are committed to engaging in and serving their home communities (however they define these)?
- What opportunities do we provide students in and outside of the classroom to prepare them for participation in a diverse democracy?

Reference

Yosso, T.J. (2005). *Whose culture has capital? Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), pp. 69–91.

Source <http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/personnel/fcpd/workshops/documents/Wrk1EditedYossoCulturalWealthSummary.pdf>