



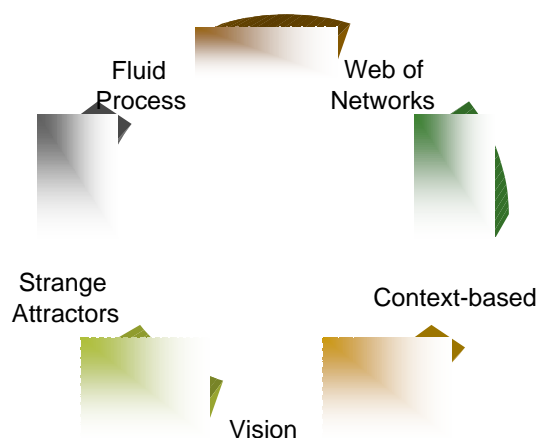
## CONTEXTUAL FLUIDITY PARTNERSHIP MODEL

The Contextual Fluidity Partnership Model (Nelson & McPherson, 2004; Nelson & McPherson, 2003) and the principles of Community Capacity Building (Nelson & Staley, 2004 a, 2004b). is inclusive of all interactions related to the partnership which include inter-disciplinary collaborations with academic colleagues, students and the civic community. The approach has:

- Encouraged the community to embrace the opportunity to teach the students about the realities of food insecurity;
- Provided support to the students and direction as needed to immerse themselves in the learning experience;
- Encouraged academic colleagues to join these initiatives by using the Contextual Fluidity model practiced in this partnership.

The model (Figure 1) is endorsed by both the academic and community partners.

**Figure 1: Five Essential Characteristics of the Contextual Fluidity Model**



From this perspective, the partnership embraces a fluid process that focuses on building resilience, robustness, diversity and ductility. This process assumes and accepts life's vicissitudes. Formal and informal interactions occur within dynamic and ever-changing webs of networks that have no designated centre. Instead, these interactions are grounded within the context of each activity. The vision always remains the anchor for any actions. In this case, our vision is that *giving students opportunities for community engagement in food security within academic course requirements will establish life-long learning skills to build the capacity of civil society and enhanced community well-being.*



Our community-based learning program is in constant motion as network interactions receive, relay and interpret information through both formal and informal linkages. Further, the model of Contextual Fluidity endorses the 'strange attractors' of formal and informal, planned and unplanned, and conscious and unconscious interactions in distinct and at times distant parts of the partnership.

This partnership model articulates community-capacity building principles that include a focus on vision as a driving force for action, the strength of multiple relationships, the building of shared values, the importance of participation in the process, a keen ear for listening to all community voices, engaging as a community member, a focus on strengths not problems, being opportunistic in using a diversity of resources, finding ways to respect and bring out the unique gifts of individuals and groups, placing more energy into the process than into definitive plans, accepting and building from mistakes, and engaging all.