

# Addressing Cultural Motivation in Global Education and Training

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*Abstract:* - This paper examines learner motivation in the context of culturally responsive teaching models in global education. Analysis of current multicultural education research, including Dr. Minjuan Wang's 2015 study of the cultural implications on global education, provided insight into the factors that impact culturally sensitive and relevant curriculum design. This analysis identified a need for a multicultural toolkit to address the rapidly evolving global marketplace.

*Key-Words:* - multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, instructional design, culture, motivation

## 1 Introduction

Culture is at the heart of education and to attempt to define culture is to attempt to answer one of life's great questions: what drives human behavior? Hence, culture and learning are closely linked to motivation [1]. A wide variety of academic disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, sociolinguistics and more, have attempted to better understand the phenomenon of culture and motivation [2]. Cultures are regularly intermingling it's getting harder to identify individuals based on a distinct border, "whether ethnic, national or geographical" [3]. The goal of this review is not to strictly define culture or motivation, but since we will examine these concepts within the context of culturally responsive teaching models in global education, we do need some working definitions:

**Culture:** *the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another* [4].

**Motivation:** *factors that activate, direct, and sustain goal-directed behavior. Motives are the "whys" of behavior - the needs or wants that drive behavior and explain what we do. We don't actually observe a motive; rather, we infer that one exists based on the behavior we observe* [5].

**Culturally Responsive Teaching:** *defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively. It is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher*

*interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly.* [2]

These definitions are helpful to frame the conversation, but it is difficult to rely on any single definition for such a rapidly evolving area of study. Motivation and learning are intrinsically linked and applying culturally responsive instructional models is paramount to meet the current need for multicultural education in a global marketplace [1][2][3].

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Background On the CALM Study

In a fall 2015 education research study of the cultural implications on global education, graduate students, led by Dr. Minjuan Wang, from San Diego State University (SDSU), created a survey instrument based on the Cultural Dimensions of Learning Framework (CDLF) developed by Patrick Parrish and Linder-VanBerschoot [6].

The questionnaire was designed to provide insights on the instructor's own cultural attitudes and learning preferences, as well as those of their students, and create a process whereby cultural preferences could inform context provided by the learning design. The SDSU education research team framed this iterative process into the Culturally Adaptive Learning Model (CALM).

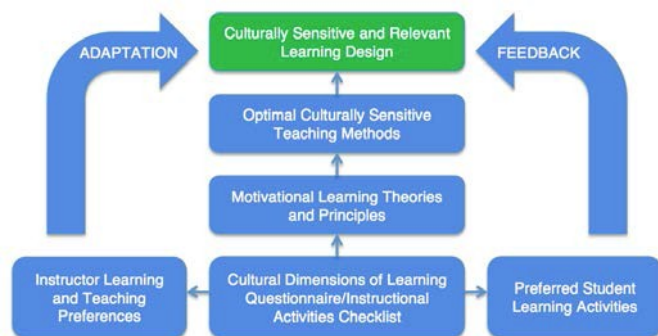


Figure 1: The CALM [16]

### 2.2 Understanding CALM

CALM (Figure 1) relies on input from instructors and students directly involved in the learning outcomes that inform curriculum design. Rather than relying on any one instructional method to represent the massive variety in learning styles and motivational theories, CALM maintains a dynamic structure that can adapt to a variety of instructional techniques that meet the needs of students anywhere in the world.

The feedback provided by instructors and students gets mapped to integrated theories of

motivational learning and culturally responsive teaching methods that are validated and well established. Research shows that no one teaching strategy will consistently engage all learners [7]. The iterative process of taking feedback from instructors and students, through established culturally adaptive teaching models, allows for flexibility in a culturally sensitive and relevant learning design.

In order to effectively gather the data needed from instructors and students, and inform the instructional design process to produce more effective learning outcomes, testing and revising the cultural learning survey instrument itself is a crucial element of our current study.

### 2.3 Current Research: Does the Cultural Dimensions of Learning Questionnaire work?

To meet the needs of a growing demand for culturally relevant global education we must continue this important research to test the validity and reliability of the cultural learning survey instrument, while simultaneously looking for ways to integrate CALM with culturally relevant learning models that focus on motivation. For the next phase of research, we are testing the cultural learning survey with a more diverse global audience of instructors and students in a corporate environment.

In the spring of 2016, another team of SDSU graduate students under the direction of Dr. Minjuan Wang, began the second phase of research by piloting the cultural learning survey instrument with the United States Pharmacopeial Convention (USP). The USP employs approximately 1000 people globally, and includes a large contingent of volunteer experts around the world. The company is headquartered in Rockville, Maryland, and has offices in Shanghai (China), Hyderabad (India), and São Paulo (Brazil), as well as smaller offices in Europe and Africa.

Although the USP is a non-profit enterprise, like many global companies they are interested in expanding multicultural training opportunities, enhancing employee engagement, and highlighting career development opportunities.

The cultural learning survey instrument has been updated to include more student focused questions to balance the survey and help global training departments gather more relevant information about their employee and instructor learning preferences to better inform an overall training strategy.

Over a period of six to eight weeks, the USP will deliver the cultural learning survey to internal employees and instructors globally, in addition to

external customers that attend USP training courses around the world.

## 2.4 Culturally Responsive Teaching

How individuals and groups respond to teaching and learning depends largely on their experiences with cultural bias – ethnic and racial history, language, sense of values, and perceptions of reality, which can affect instructors and students, “ultimately aiding or hindering the learning process” [1]. Teachers may wonder how they can better motivate students, but motivation is not something they can *do to students*. Instead teachers should work very closely with students to “interpret and deepen their existing knowledge and enthusiasm for learning. From this viewpoint, motivationally effective teaching is culturally responsive teaching” [7].

Geneva Gay [2] lists five essential elements for culturally responsive teaching: developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum, demonstrating caring and building learning communities, communicating with ethnically diverse students, and responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction.

Alison Hramiak [8] expands on the five characteristics, initially listed by Gay, that make up the basic framework of Culturally Responsive Teaching:

1. It acknowledges the different cultural heritage of pupils as legacies that affect their learning and as valuable content within the curriculum
2. It bridges the gap between home and school, and between academic concepts and sociocultural realities
3. It deploys a variety of teaching and learning strategies
4. It encourages and instructs pupils to embrace and praise each other’s cultural heritages
5. It incorporates a range of multicultural information, resources, teaching and learning materials

The complexity of studying culture and motivation makes it nearly impossible reduce a human being to a *pedagogical checklist* [1]. Large-scale surveys have been conducted that suggest a “strong positive relationship between students’ perceptions of teachers who honor their voice as indicators of motivation and achievement” [9].

It is important to establish a learning environment that provides a “meaningful context for addressing and redressing the ways bias occurs” [1]. Kim and Slapac [3] refer to a *third space*, where

students see a meaningful connection between in-school and out-of-school spaces, where teachers and students can share diverse perspectives freely. It is important to consider students as active participants and collaborators in the construction of meaning for a culturally responsive pedagogy to effectively bridge the gap between various identities and cultures.

## 2.5 Cultural Collaboration in the Classroom

The CALM way of thinking allows students to collaborate with instructors and share opinions that will shape the design of the course. Kim and Slapac [3] detail a *multidimensional pedagogy* that stresses the importance of collaboration between students and teachers. They describe the importance of *multiliteracies* as the “diverse literary practices in multimodal ways through mixing and matching different styles, languages, modes and registers to express [student’s] ideas and identities” [10].

Gay [2] argues “explicit knowledge about cultural diversity is imperative to meeting the education needs of ethnically diverse students.” She places a great deal of responsibility on the instructor by suggesting that all teachers take courses on the “contributions of ethnic groups to the content areas they teach to enhance multicultural education by weaving detailed factual information about the cultural particularities of specific ethnic groups into lesson plans.”

Researchers such as Lewis Johnson [11] see cultural training as behavior change and believe that teachers must go beyond just learning facts about other cultures. Teachers need to understand that intercultural competence is a process “that results in the adoption of new behaviors and attitudes conducive to cross-cultural encounters, possibly overcoming old behaviors and attitudes that stand in the way. This ultimately is a process of behavior change [11].”

Ginsberg [1] establishes a balance by adding that, “differentiating teaching and learning in ways that are motivating and equitable requires knowing students well. It is through knowing students, families, and communities well that one can continually polish the lens of equity.” Gay [2] does agree to some extent that good multicultural teachers know how to use *cultural scaffolding*, which calls on students to manufacture experiences that increase intellectual understanding and enhance meaning through culture.

Two of the examples Gay [2] believes teachers should know are relevant here:

- A. Which ethnic groups give priority to communal living and cooperative problem

solving and how these preferences affect education motivation, aspiration and task performance

- B. The implications of gender role socialization in different ethnic groups for implementing equity initiatives in classroom instruction [2].

In order to provide an authentic experience for ethnically diverse students, teachers will need a substantial stockpile of multicultural instructional examples to use when teaching. Teachers have a responsibility to understand how culture shapes learning and how they can develop classrooms that “tap into the intrinsic motivation of culturally diverse learners” [1].

Teachers can influence motivation of students by coming to know their perspective and seeing them as active participants in producing learning outcomes by drawing on their unique cultural and personal identities. Sharing resources and working together can be a powerful motivator [7].

## 2.6 Motivation and Cultural Context

Every discussion of motivation must examine two basic theories, which again require working definitions in terms of culturally responsive teaching:

- Extrinsic motivation: The old “carrot and stick” metaphor where the focus of learning is on prizes, grades, test scores, certificates, etc.
- Intrinsic motivation: participation in learning experiences that, even in the absence of extrinsic rewards or sanctions, are of interest and value to students [1].

There is a growing volume of research that asserts relating motivation to learn with external reward and punishments largely alienates students from engagement and success in education environments [7].

In a study on motivation in the virtual classroom, Artyushina and Sheypak [12] noted that extrinsic values only held the attention of students during class sessions, but outside of that controlled environment, “unless the desired goals and behaviors have been internalized, the learners will cease the desired behavior and operate according to his or her internal standards or to other external factors [12].”

According to the data below (Figure 2), presented by SDSU alumni Dr. Frank Nguyen, et al. [13], when support is closely integrated into the work there are large increases in use, performance and positive attitudes toward the product. It’s the same principle for intrinsic motivation. When

rewards for student success are intrinsically motivated they perform better [1].

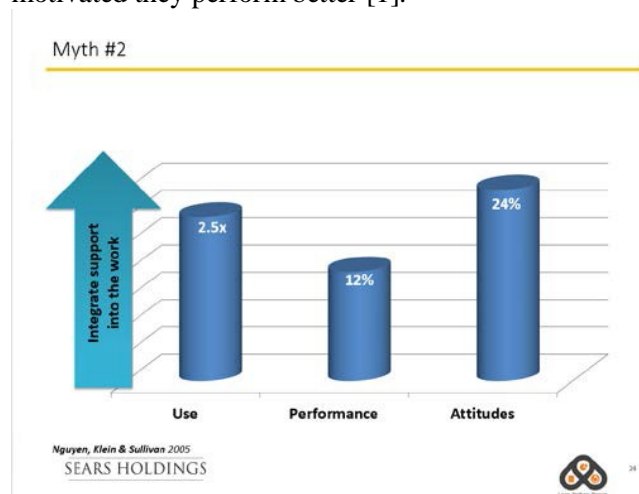


Figure 2: Nguyen, Klein & Sullivan [13]

Ronnel King and Dennis McInerney [14] provide a very thorough analysis of current research on culture and education, recognizing that motivation is strongly influenced by contextual factors, yet realizing the *dynamic nature of culture* and student motivation that make it difficult to study.

Artyushina and Sheypak [12] also noted that there an “enormous gap exists between knowing that learning must be motivated and identifying the specific motivational components of any particular act. Teachers must focus on learning patterns of motivation for an individual or group, with the realization that errors will be common [12].”

Education researchers, Ian Gibson and Michelle Selinger [15], are keen on creating what has been called, *education for all*, but warn us about the “dangers of homogenizing and diluting the value of cultural differences for those who import international models of education, a concept Rizer has referred to as the McDonaldisation of society.” To support their notion of a *global curriculum*, Gibson and Selinger [15] offer the following factors that should be taken into consideration when constructing a culturally relevant motivational framework:

- The range and level of expertise of students (learners) and teachers (pedagogical approach)
- The variations in access to the Internet
- Cultural expectations and learning traditions
- Technological traditions and the extent of technological developments
- Curriculum relevance
- Realistic evaluation of globally derived motivations and models from other cultures unrelated to local realities

- A strong focus on partnering in order to ensure adaptability and flexibility of the final product
- Recognition of local input and a learning orientation based on understanding of local contextual and historical variables

## 2.7 Motivational Framework

The Motivational framework for cultural responsive teaching (Figure 3), developed by Ginsberg and Wlodkowski [7], synthesizes concepts from the multiple disciplines to inform a comprehensive understanding of motivation that teachers and students actively create together. The motivational framework is the second tier of a CALM approach to integrating learning theories imbued with numerous principles of intrinsic motivation and respect for cultural integrity.

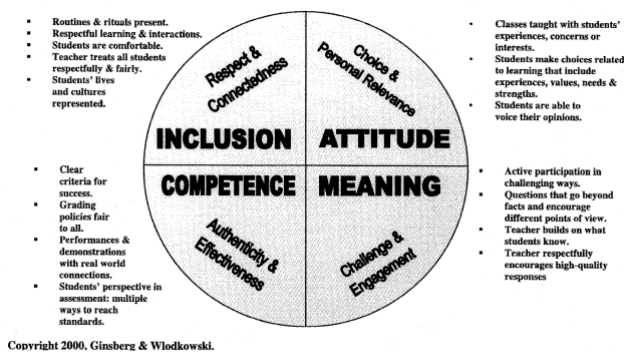


Figure 1 The motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching.

Figure 3: Ginsberg & Wlodkowski [7]

There are four basic conditions (attributes in a learning environment) at the heart of the motivational framework that work in concert to encourage and support students' intrinsic motivation and natural interest in learning:

- **Establishing inclusion:** refers to the principles and practices that contribute to a learning environment in which students and teachers feel respected by and connected to one another
- **Developing a positive attitude:** principles and practices that contribute to, through personal and cultural relevance and through choice, a favorable disposition toward learning.
- **Enhancing meaning:** this condition expands and strengthens learning in ways that matter to students and builds their identities as valued civic participants through challenging and engaging learning
- **Engendering competence:** helps students become effective at what they value,

authentically identifying what they know and can do, and linking them to a hopeful future. Establish clear criteria for success understood and agreed to at the start of the lesson [1] [7].

According to Ginsberg [1] the benefit of using this framework is that it “demystifies the role of culture in teaching and learning, without prescribing lists of learning preference and teaching approaches for entire student groups.”

Instructional designers can map responses from the cultural learning survey to any one of the four conditions to develop lesson plans through an established culturally adaptive teaching model that allows for flexibility in culturally sensitive and relevant learning design.

Ginsberg [7] goes into further detail about how teachers can use the four motivational conditions and defines the *Norms* as explicit values espoused by the teacher and students, *Procedures* are learning processes that carry out the norms, and *Structures* are the rules or biding expectations that support the norms and procedures (see the Appendix).

## 3 Problem Solution

Current research aims to help educators design multicultural lessons based on empirical data utilizing a finely tuned cultural learning survey instrument and applying the cultural framework lens. The process has two key phases:

1. **Focus group** – opportunity to deploy the cultural learning survey and ask relevant questions to cross-section of intended audience (ideally those directly involved in the learning outcomes)
2. **Synthesize key findings** – analyze culture learning survey data in relation to CALM and develop culturally adaptive learning objectives that allow for flexibility in culturally sensitive and relevant learning design.

Teachers and small training departments around the world desperately need a multicultural toolkit to help them keep pace with a rapidly evolving global marketplace. The current research study on the cultural learning survey moves us closer to asking the right questions.

Ginsberg's framework is a culturally relevant and intrinsically motivating filter for data gathered through the cultural learning survey. The four conditions are part of a CALM way of thinking that relies on collaboration between teachers and students before and during the learning event to produce more effective learning outcomes learners from every culture around the world.

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