

# UNDERSTANDING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CULTURE AND MOTIVATION TO LEARN

In recognizing the humanity of our fellow beings,  
we pay ourselves the highest tribute.

—*Thurgood Marshall*

How can culturally diverse people in higher education learn well together in ways that are relevant and stimulating? For postsecondary educators, the response to this question can be examined through the lessons of history, linguistics, the arts, and any number of other disciplines. As each of us grapples with complicated notions about fairness, respect, or, for that matter, what it means to learn, this book offers forms of pedagogical action that are widely considered to enhance student motivation and learning. Our premise is that educators who seek to support learning among diverse groups of students need to be increasingly intentional and imaginative about instructional practice. Colleges and universities have more learners than ever before whose perceptions and ways of making meaning vary from one another and from the instructor. Influenced by global forces and unprecedented patterns of migration and immigration, skillful postsecondary teaching has become a highly nuanced endeavor.

In the United States, alone, almost 30 million people were born in other countries. Forty-eight percent of students in New York City's public schools come from immigrant-headed households that represent more than a hundred languages. In California, 1.5 million students are classified as English language

learners. In Dodge City, Kansas, more than 30 percent of public school students are the children of immigrants (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2002). The implications of these statistics for higher education are significant.

Although high school graduation rates have steadily improved in the United States, students from low-income families continue to perform significantly lower on assessments of literacy and mathematics achievements before they even start kindergarten. These differences tend to persist as students progress through school and raise considerable equity concerns (Lee and Burkham, 2002). Nearly half of black Americans have a high school diploma or less, according to 2005 data from the U.S. Census Bureau. In contrast, more than seven in ten Asian Americans ages twenty-five to sixty-four and more than six in ten European Americans have completed some college (EPE Research Center, 2007).

Yet in the twenty-first century, a college degree has become more important than ever before. A college graduate in the United States earns on average \$23,441 more per year than a high school graduate and \$31,595 more than a high school dropout (Olson, 2007). And while only 7 percent of twenty-four-year-olds from low-income families had earned a four-year college degree in 1999–2000, 52 percent of those from high-income families had completed a postsecondary degree. Making learning more accessible at every level is not only a matter of equity. It has significant pragmatic value.

This book does not attempt to address the larger policy environment of postsecondary education in the United States and throughout the rest of the world. Although we are deeply concerned with broader issues and their influence on educational concerns, this book's contribution is in the detail of daily teaching and ongoing program development. It is serendipitous that it comes at a time when colleges and universities are beginning to experience the same scrutiny on graduation rates and demonstrating what students have learned as elementary and secondary education. Our primary interest is, and has long been,

to assert that there is more that each of us can do as educators and educational leaders to redress disparate learning conditions. This book offers perspectives on and ideas for strengthening pedagogical skill through the lens of intrinsic motivation.

Motivation is a topic that concerns most educators. Within our own teaching environments, we understand that students' concentration, imagination, effort, and willingness to continue are powerfully influenced by how they feel about the setting they are in, the respect they receive from the people around them, and their ability to trust their own thinking and experiences. People who feel unsafe, unconnected, and disrespected are often unmotivated to learn. This is as true, if not more so, in college as it is in prekindergarten through twelfth grade. Such a conclusion does not explain all the issues and barriers related to the progress of people of color and low-income students in postsecondary educational settings, but it is fundamental to what happens among learners and teachers wherever they meet. In education, the day-to-day, face-to-face feelings matter tremendously with respect to whether people stay or leave and whether they are willing to direct their energy toward learning.

This book offers concrete ideas about how students and teachers can create a milieu that promotes learning. In our opinion, to do so means that those with the most power in the classroom, those often in the majority, must take the greater responsibility for initiating or participating in the process. The task is a difficult one. As Lisa Delpit (1988) eloquently states, "We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs. To put our beliefs on hold is to cease to exist as ourselves for a moment—and that is not easy. It is painful as well, because it means turning yourself inside out, giving up your own sense of who you are, and being willing to see yourself in the unflattering light of another's angry gaze.... We must learn to be vulnerable enough to allow our world to turn upside down in order to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into our consciousness" (1988, p. 297).

In other words, this task requires raising questions about discrimination or scrutinizing one's own power, even if that power stems merely from being in the majority. Certainly what follows in this book, when taken in the light of what typically occurs in many learning settings in postsecondary education, invites that kind of questioning.

Making direct suggestions for change was a challenge for us because we do not pretend to know what is best. Clearly we have very strong beliefs about what might be better. These beliefs are informed by research and experiences, both of which lead us to ask readers to keep in mind at least two sensibilities while reading this book. First, acknowledge what can and should be done on a personal level as soon as possible, and earnestly pursue it. Second, identify the larger long-term and institutional changes that require resources and collective action, and begin to discuss these with others to create the means to make them happen.

This book is not a blueprint. What is considered motivating varies across cultures and among individual human beings. People are experts on their own lives. Using a multidisciplinary approach that includes but is not limited to philosophy, anthropology, communications, critical theory, feminist theory, adult learning theory, multicultural studies, and linguistics as well as psychology, we offer an interpretive and process-based approach that is more in keeping with the metaphor of a compass than a map. There are essential directions to take because all people are intrinsically motivated to learn and share a common humanity. But the cultural terrain of each individual's life so varies that the path to understanding another person is beyond the precision of any modern mental cartographer.

### **The Influence of Culture**

The cultural composition of today's postsecondary learners differs markedly from that of thirty years ago, when many of today's college educators were beginning their careers or were still in

school. If we look only from the perspective of ethnicity and language, we realize that the wave of immigration absorbed by the United States during the 1990s was the largest in seventy years and that today at least one out of every four people in this country speak a language other than English in their home. (For a more extensive discussion on factors influencing migration to the United States, see Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2002; Adams, Bell, and Griffin 2007.)

In addition, 73 percent of all college students today can be identified as nontraditional learners (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2002). They possess one or more of the following characteristics: delayed enrollment into postsecondary education, part-time attendance, financial independence, a full-time job, dependents other than a spouse or domestic partner, single parent, or nonstandard high school diploma. Interestingly, the majority of adult college students age twenty-five or older are women—approximately 65 percent (Aslanian, 2001).

It is not surprising that the topic of motivation and cultural diversity is of interest to so many teachers. For more than might care to admit it, the convergence of multiple and, at times, far-ranging perspectives among students contributes to a binary classroom dynamic with chaotic or *laissez-faire* exchanges, on the one hand, and majority cultural dominance on the other. For students armed with academic self-confidence and hierarchical connections, certain approaches to instruction may be uncomfortable. But we would argue that it is even more daunting for the increasing number of postsecondary students whose success relies on instructional interactions in the classroom. Their instructor's attention to teaching is essential. Taking a closer look at the concept of culture can help educators understand why culturally diverse classrooms frequently challenge the resources of educators, even those who are earnest and experienced. Quite simply, what seems to have once worked for classroom teaching may now be clearly inadequate, whether in the area of encouraging motivation, initiating humor, or helping students to learn effectively.

As a society, we are two generations removed from legally sanctioned educational segregation, yet despite efforts to integrate urban schools through busing, many of us who now teach grew up in what appeared to be monocultural schools and communities. It is likely that we were socialized in our formative years with an unexamined set of traditions and beliefs about ourselves and a limited knowledge about others. In addition, as members of human communities, our identities have been fundamentally constructed in relation to others (Rogoff, 2003; Tatum, 2007). Being socialized and living in the dominant culture often lessens awareness that beliefs and behaviors reflect a particular racial group, ethnic heritage, sexual orientation, or gender affiliation. This is especially so if we are white, European American, heterosexual males. For many educators, it is not a stretch to think of these attitudes and norms as universally valued and preferred.

A dominant group can so successfully project its way of seeing social reality that its view is accepted as common sense, as part of the natural order, even by those who are disempowered or marginalized by it (Foucault, 1980; Freire and Macedo, 1987). We may not imagine that we hold negative assumptions or stereotypes toward people with other values or beliefs (Adams and Marchesani, 1992; Butler, 1993). In fact, for some, it may feel like heresy to acknowledge that Anglo Americans and dominant Western norms enjoy a position of privilege and power in this country's educational system that has diminished other norms as valuable as cooperation (versus competition) and interdependence (versus independence).

Although culture is taught, it is generally conveyed in ways that are indirect or a part of everyday life (Anzaldua, 1987; Young, 1990; Schein, 1992). That is one of the reasons that it is difficult for most of us to describe ourselves culturally in explicit terms. The times we are likely to experience uniqueness as cultural beings occur when we are in the presence of those who appear different from ourselves. As an example, a person

from a family and community that is emotionally demonstrative and sees this as a sign of open communication may embarrass or concern a person whose own traditions view public modesty as a mark of respect for that which is greater than oneself. When we meet others whose family or community norms vary from our own, it is akin to holding up a mirror, provoking questions we might not otherwise think to ask. Contrast and dissonance can be disturbing in spite of the opportunity they present to examine assumptions, making it possible to more deeply understand who we are in relation to one another.

The most obvious cultural characteristics that people observe are physical. On the surface, race, gender, age, and other observable characteristics signal social group membership. Clearly, however, physical characteristics provide only cursory insight into another person. In fact, it is interesting to note who is not typically defined by physical characteristics in media and everyday conversation. To be blunt, white men are rarely defined by whiteness and maleness. The idea about what is “normal” can be so psychologically ingrained that it is entirely possible to overlook one’s own assumptions about people whose physical characteristics or repertoire of behaviors fall outside a familiar sphere. Of course, even within the supposedly unitary majority culture, there is tremendous variation (Said, 1993; Lobo and Peters, 2001; Banks, 2001). A clear perspective on anyone’s interior landscape is remarkably complicated.

Educators who seek to be highly responsive to students are often puzzled by how to pedagogically enact their respect for diversity. Personal histories and psychological traits interact dynamically and distinguish human beings as individuals. The subtle complexity of who we are makes it difficult to define a person by a set of narrow or static characteristics. The primary point here is that the variation and distinction among cultural groups transcend a single set of cultural norms. When we accept norms as universal, we are likely to see deficit rather than difference. One common example occurs in classrooms where the

teachers rely heavily on the Socratic seminar, one of several instructional methods that, in the absence of adequate student preparation, tends to favor those for whom assertive public discourse is a part of everyday life. Should an instructor perceive this form of active participation as evidence of being smart, entire groups of students may find themselves at risk of failure.

Certain forms of discourse in higher education are commonly viewed as a sign of preparation and analytical skill, and students with public reserve may be misjudged as underprepared, linguistically or cognitively limited, lacking in initiative, easily intimidated, or even arrogant. The presumption of deficit in human beings who fail to conform to expectations and standards that are commonly associated with a dominant culture is one of the key factors accounting for dropout rates from kindergarten through postsecondary education. Throughout the literature on retention and attrition, this phenomenon is attributed to a broad range of institutional barriers that fail to take into account the expectations and experiences of students from a host of cultural backgrounds, many of which may differ from those of the majority culture (Adams, 1992; Yosso, 2005; Hebel, 2007). It is our hope that there will always be ambiguity and nuance in understanding ourselves and others as cultural beings, learners, community members, and world citizens. However, being aware of and responsive to cultural variation is an essential aspect of equitable instruction.

In diverse postsecondary classrooms, we believe that opportunities for pluralistic discourse on issues of race, ethnicity, and a host of civic issues ought to occur across disciplines. The ability for human beings to engage respectfully with different belief systems extends well beyond the social sciences and humanities. All of academia must accept a share of responsibility. This matter is important to the educational quality of instruction, and the moral implications are vast.

If university-educated adults know little about their classmates and even less about the rest of the world, the impact of



a university education as it relates to democratic values will remain largely theoretical (Galston, 2006). Today, more than ever before, discourse about tensions that arise from cultural pluralism in classrooms and global contexts is all too easily trumped by knowledge that can quickly be converted into utility (Engell and Dangerfield, 2005).

Culture is the deeply learned confluence of language, values, beliefs, and behaviors that pervade every aspect of a person's life, and it is continually undergoing changes. What it is not is an isolated, mechanical aspect of life that can be used to directly explain phenomena in the classroom or that can be learned as a series of facts, physical elements, or exotic characteristics (Ovando and Collier, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999). Cultural awareness takes into account that human beings are suspended in webs of significance that we create. Drawing from Geertz (1973), an analysis of culture is "not an experimental science in search of a law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (pp. 5, 29).

Geertz's perspective is fundamental to this book. There are few hard-and-fast rules about entire groups of people. Similarly, there are few hard-and-fast rules about the ways in which human beings work and learn together. As teachers, being aware of our own beliefs and biases and being open to the meaning that is created through authentic interactions with diverse students is fundamental. Without such awareness, stereotypes and biases that reside within learning environments become agents of historic patterns of marginalization.

Stereotyping is rooted in our assumptions about the "average characteristics" of a group. We then impose those assumptions on all individuals from the group. In fact, some of the characteristics commonly associated with European Americans—for example, Christianity, individualism, and social conservatism—have become so pervasive that these traits have become a form of taken-for-granted national "commonsense" (Sue, 1991; Blum, 2005). Indeed, a great deal of heterogeneity exists within as well as across

all cultural groups. “Seek first to understand” is a bit of wisdom whose genesis lies within many ethnic and faith communities.

Educators as well as students have beliefs and values regarding learning and the roles of teacher and learner. These are culturally transmitted through history, religion, media, family, mythology, and political orientation. The ways in which we experience a learning situation are mediated by such cultural influences. No learning situation is culturally neutral. If we are European American and teach as we were taught, it is likely that we sanction individual performance, prefer “reasoned” argumentation, advocate impersonal objectivity, and condone sportslike competition for testing and grading procedures. Such teaching represents a distinct set of cultural norms and values that for many of today’s learners are at best culturally unfamiliar and at worst a contradiction of the norms and values of their gender or their racial and ethnic backgrounds. In a Socratic seminar, many learners find themselves in a dilemma if they have been socialized toward a value of cooperation in their families and communities but are expected to be highly competitive within educational settings.

Few of us in postsecondary settings would care to admit that the way we teach compromises the learning of members of certain cultural groups. And many would agree that higher education has a responsibility to safeguard against a majority rule that functions oppressively for a minority. Yet in spite of new instructional technologies, teaching centers, and the language of learning styles, the tension between a serious examination of teaching practices and research is real.

This issue, as well as our concern that colleges and universities have moved too far away from involvement with the broader social communities in which they reside, exceeds our emphasis on pedagogy in this book. But our commitment to educational access and opportunity requires us to acknowledge that colleges and universities implicitly and explicitly perpetuate larger systems of inequality. We encourage educators to examine policy and structural issues in higher education and in local

communities that undermine the conditions for change within classrooms. (On the themes of commercialization, student civic disinterest, and a desire to increase faculty involvement with their surrounding communities, see Galston, 2006, and Engell and Dangerfield, 2005.)

We also encourage educators to become familiar with various interpretations of the term *diversity*. It is a word whose meanings are dependent on the context in which it is being understood. An anthropological approach to diversity would provide a comparative view of human groups within the context of all human groups. A political approach would analyze issues of power and class. Applied to a learning situation and the purpose of this book, diversity conveys a need to respect similarities and differences among human beings and to move beyond simply developing sensitivity to active and effective responsiveness. This requires constructive action to change ideas and attitudes that perpetuate the exclusion of underserved groups of students and significantly challenge their motivation to learn.

In addition to the various academic connotations of the word *diversity*, some view its general use as platitudinal or euphemistic. Although we use the words *diversity*, *cultural diversity*, and *cultural pluralism* interchangeably, there is the belief that language associated with cultural differences must acknowledge issues of racism, discrimination, and the experience of exclusion. This argument implicates *diversity* as a way to dilute or skirt critical issues by implicitly representing all forms of difference—including individual differences and heterogeneity—within personal identities (Nieto, 2004; Geismar and Nicoleau, 1993; Adams, Bell, and Griffin, 2007). Some see the term *cultural diversity* as more closely connected to issues of racial, economic, and political marginalization. Our point here is to acknowledge that each of us has beliefs and understandings that guide and challenge our work within a pluralistic society. Despite the earnestness with which we use language, we are frequently implicated through the meanings we are trying to express.

Although we use the term *diversity* throughout this book, we are advocates for social justice education that includes an understanding that social inequality is structured and maintained in ways that protect privileged interests. By *privilege*, another common term in this book, we mean unearned access to resources and social power, often because of social group membership.

With respect to cultural diversity, this book offers a macrocultural pedagogical framework. Our framework is built on principles and structures that are meaningful across cultures, especially with students from families and communities that have not historically experienced success in higher education. Rather than comparing and contrasting groups of people from a microcultural perspective—one that, for example, identifies a specific ethnic group and prescribes approaches to teaching according to assumed characteristics and orientations—our approach emerges from literature on and experience with creating a more equitable pluralistic framework that elicits the intrinsic motivation of all learners. The complicated interaction of history, personality, cultural transmission, and cultural transformation is yet another worthy area of exploration outside the scope of this book. A macrocultural framework can provide instructional guidance without reducing dynamic groups of people to sets of stereotypical characteristics. Our emphasis is on creating multiple approaches from which teachers may choose in order to more consistently support the diverse perspectives and values that learners bring to the classroom. This does not, of course, preclude the need for ongoing examination of one's own socialization, cultural identity, and related practices.

### **Personal Appreciation of the Concept of Culture**

Unless we as educators understand our own culturally mediated values and biases, we may be misguided in believing that we are encouraging divergent points of view and providing

meaningful opportunities for learning to occur when we are in fact repackaging or disguising past dogmas. It is entirely possible to believe in the need for change and therefore learn new languages and techniques, and yet overlay new ideas with old biases and frames of reference. It is possible to diminish the potential and the needs of others at our most subconscious levels and in our most implicit ways without any awareness that we are doing so. Mindfulness of who we are and what we believe culturally can help us examine the ways in which we may be unknowingly placing our good intentions within a dominant and unyielding framework—in spite of the appearance of openness and receptivity to enhancing motivation to learn among all students.

One of the most useful places to begin the exploration of who we are culturally and the relevance of that identity is to ask what values we hold that are consistent with the dominant culture. This question allows us to be cognizant not only of our dominant-culture values but also of the distinctions we hold as members of other groups in society. This is particularly important for fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-generation Americans of European descent. For many descendants of European Americans, one's family's country or countries of origin can be only marginally useful in understanding who we are now as cultural people in the United States. The desire and ability to assimilate, as well as affiliations with numerous other groups (religious, socioeconomic, regional, and so forth), can create confusion about the cultural origins of personal beliefs and values. Furthermore, culture is a dynamic and changing concept for each of us, regardless of the country of our geographical origin. Our cultural identities are constantly evolving or changing, and consequently values, customs, and orientations are fluid. Because we as educators exert a powerful influence over classroom norms, it is important to make explicit those values that are most often implicit and profoundly affect students in our classrooms.

Several approaches can help to personalize the concept of culture. One way to gain insight into the elusive concept of culture is to consider the research of sociologist Robin M. Williams Jr. (1970). Williams identified cultural themes that tend to be enduring reflections of dominant values, which in the United States have been northern European. These themes may or may not be operative in a classroom, but because belief systems influence teaching practices, the selected themes, condensed by Locke (1992), may provide a useful source for reflecting on prevailing rhetorical, cultural, and political norms in a classroom. In the list that follows, each theme, in *italics*, is accompanied by at least one alternative perspective. The alternative examples are meant to invite a conversation about counterbeliefs and values that students and teachers bring to a learning environment:

1. *Achievement and success*: People emphasize rags to riches in stories.

*Alternatives*: Personal generosity is the highest human value; conspicuous consumption represents greed and self-interest; “rags to riches” is rooted in cultural mythology that overlooks the social, political, and economic forces that favor certain groups over others. Thus, achievement has at least as much to do with privilege as do personal desire and effort.

2. *Activity and work*: People see this country as a land of busy people who stress disciplined, productive activity as a worthy end in itself.

*Alternatives*: People believe that caring about and taking time for others is more important than “being busy”; discipline can take many forms and should be equated with respect, moral action, and social conscience; a means-ends orientation has been the justification for such things as cultural genocide and environmental disaster; sustenance is a higher value than productivity.

3. *Humanitarian mores*: People spontaneously come to the aid of others and hold traditional sympathy for the underdog.

*Alternatives*: Human beings are selective about whom they will help; for some, personal gain takes precedence over kindness and generosity; for others, human emotion is to be avoided because it makes them feel vulnerable and inept.

4. *Moral orientation*: People judge life events and situations in terms of right and wrong.

*Alternatives*: People feel there is no objective right or wrong and that such a perspective tends to favor and protect the most privileged members of society; finding meaning in life events and situations is more important than judging.

5. *Efficiency and practicality*: People emphasize the practical value of getting things done.

*Alternatives*: People believe that process is just as important as product and that it makes the strongest statement about what an individual values; living and working in a manner that values equity and fairness is both practical and just.

6. *Progress*: People hold the optimistic view that things will get better.

*Alternatives*: People believe that the idea of progress assumes human beings can and should control nature and life circumstances; instead, we ought to acknowledge, respect, and care for that which we have been given, that which is greater than ourselves, and that which is, like life, cyclical. (Interestingly, many languages in the Americas and around the world do not include a word for *progress*.)

7. *Material comfort*: People emphasize the good life. Conspicuous consumption is sanctioned.

*Alternatives*: People believe that a good life is defined by sharing and giving things away. The idea that life will be good if one owns many possessions leads to insatiable behavior and greed.

8. *Freedom*: People believe in freedom with an intensity others might reserve for religion.

*Alternatives*: People believe that freedom without justice is dangerous; limiting freedom is necessary for equality; accepting the limitations of personal freedom is a sign of respect for others.

9. *Individual personality*: People believe that every individual should be independent, responsible, and self-respecting; the group should not take precedent over the individual.

*Alternatives*: People believe that sharing and humility are higher values than ownership and self-promotion; self-respect is inseparable from respect for others, community, and that which is greater than oneself. Individualism can promote aggression and competition in ways that undermine the confidence and self-respect of others; independence denies the social, cultural, racial, and economic realities that favor members of certain groups over others.

10. *Science and secular rationality*: People have esteem for the sciences as a means of asserting mastery over the environment.

*Alternatives*: People believe the earth is a sacred gift to be revered and protected. The notion of scientific objectivity is based on the mistaken presumption that human beings are capable of value-neutral beliefs and behaviors.

11. *Nationalism-patriotism*: People believe in a strong sense of loyalty to that which is deemed "American."

*Alternatives*: People believe that, functionally, "American" has meant conformity to Anglo European values, behaviors, and appearances; the way in which the word *American* is commonly used to describe a single country on the continent of the Americas is presumptuous and arrogant; "American" needs to be redefined in the spirit of pluralism and with respect for other global identities.



12. *Democracy*: People believe that every person should have a voice in the political destiny of their country.

*Alternatives*: People believe that democracy is an illusion that perpetuates the domination of society's most privileged members; people must have the means and capacity to use their voices—this requires access to multiple perspectives on issues and confidence that speaking up will not jeopardize one's economic and personal security.

13. *Racism and related group superiority*: People believe that racism represents a value conflict in the culture of the United States because it emphasizes differential evaluation of racial, religious, and ethnic groups. They argue for a color-blind ideology based on the assumption that social and economic advantage in contemporary life is the consequence of merit and hard work.

*Alternatives*: People believe that racism combines prejudice with power and is personal, institutional, and cultural. It has been used for over four hundred years as a way to secure the psychological, educational, and material dominance of a select group. Without acknowledgment of its existence, it is impossible for members of a society to examine the implications of advantage and power and develop practices that level the playing field.

When we clarify our own cultural values and biases, we are better able to consider how they might subtly but profoundly influence the degree to which learners in our classrooms feel included, respected, at ease, and generally motivated to learn. The range of considerations found in Williams's cultural themes can be helpful as we think of questions to ask ourselves about our own assumptions and as we construct reflective questions to enhance the learning experiences. We offer the following examples, with related ideas:

- *Are classroom norms clear, so that if they are different from what students are used to at home or in their communities, they are able to understand and negotiate alternative ways of being?* It may be important to model behavior, provide visible examples of expectations, and elicit information through student polls or written responses to such questions as, “Do you prefer to work in a cooperative group? individually?” Some students are embarrassed to identify what they do not understand. The anonymity of writing, or conferencing with peers and then sharing the information with an instructor, can facilitate communication. One additional consideration is clarity about time. For students from communities where time is not a commodity that can be spent, wasted, or managed and is experienced more in relation to natural patterns, expectations about punctuality require thoughtful clarity.
- *Have I examined the values embedded in my discipline that may confuse or disturb some students?* Ask questions that encourage students to represent alternative perspectives; with students, construct panels that can discuss key issues from diverse perspectives and help students organize discussion groups for collaborative dialogue and knowledge sharing.
- *Are the examples I use to illustrate key points meaningful to and respectful of students?* Give one example from your own experience, and then ask students to create their own examples to illustrate different points, providing an opportunity for group discussion. Acknowledge the experiences of people from different backgrounds, and be aware of nonverbal language and voice. For example, there is some evidence that a voice with less modulation connotes authority and knowledge, while an approachable voice invites thinking. Regardless, seeking feedback through regular anonymous surveys can be instructive.
- *Do I have creative and effective ways to learn about my students’ lives and interests?* You might want to incorporate a photo

board, artistic representations, occasional potluck meals, regularly scheduled discussion topics (including current events), acknowledgment of birthdays and cultural holidays, open sharing about yourself, a coffee urn at the back of the classroom as a site for informal discussion, and other similar opportunities.

- *Am I aware of nonverbal communication from a multicultural and cross-cultural perspective?* For many students socialized within the dominant culture of the United States, physical proximity has little effect on emotional safety or academic effectiveness. Similarly, a well-modulated voice signals authority and knowledge. But this varies considerably across cultures (Gudykunst and Kim, 1992; Remland, 2000), and a well-modulated voice, for example, is not necessarily one that is approachable or invites thinking. Although research on communication tends to be painted with a fairly broad brush, attention to voice, proximity, and other kinetic characteristics can determine who gets the floor, whose perspective is respected, and who enjoys learning (Goldin-Meadow, 2003; Andersen and Wang, 2006).

We believe it is important to keep in mind that although individualism has been argued to be the backbone of democracy, it is also considered to contribute to crime, alienation, loneliness, and narcissism. A good place to begin is to consider our own repertoire of behaviors in relation to whom we are teaching, with the understanding that status influences perseverance in spite of how we teach (Bourdieu, 1986). A small focus group of diverse students can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of learner needs.

Peggy McIntosh (1989) has poignantly written: “As a white person I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an

advantage.... I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group" (p. 10).

Many of us have been socialized, regardless of racial group membership, to think of the United States as a just society. It is hard to imagine that each of us is responsible for everyday actions that can render people as impotent as overt and intentional acts of racism can. The learning environment provides a meaningful context for addressing and redressing the ways in which bias occurs. Learning about who we are culturally, as individuals and as educators, can create a consciousness that is personally, professionally, and socially empowering.

### **Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Challenges of Cultural Pluralism**

Amid great challenge, the United States is moving from the philosophy of an assimilationist melting pot to the philosophy of cultural pluralism, in which members of diverse cultural, social, racial, or religious groups are free to maintain their own identity and yet simultaneously share a larger common political organization, economic system, and social structure (Banks, 2006). Some of this is by will. Undoubtedly some changes can be attributed to significant demographic shifts. In 1970, more than 60 percent of the nation's 9.6 million immigrants originated in Europe, 19 percent in Central and South America, 9 percent in Asia, and 10 percent in other parts of the world. By 2000, only 15 percent of the 28.4 million immigrants in the United States originated in Europe (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002; Passel and Suro, 2005). This change has resulted in a new U.S. landscape, one in which many members of immigrant communities have moved beyond port-of-entry cities to suburban metropolitan areas and rural communities (Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, 2007). With such changes, the idea of monocultural community and educational norms becomes increasingly preposterous.

Although the promise of a peaceful coexistence among people with diverse lifestyles, language patterns, religious practices, and family structures has long been espoused along with other democratic values, the philosophical position of multiculturalism has been slow to manifest itself in educational institutions. The premise of a pluralistic democracy presumes that there is equal respect for the backgrounds and contemporary circumstances of diverse learners, regardless of individual status and power, and that there is a design for learning processes that embraces the range of needs, interests, and orientations to be found among them.

For the pedagogy of the educational system of a society espousing cultural pluralism, the challenge is to create learning experiences that allow the integrity of every learner to be sustained while each person attains relevant educational success and mobility. Meeting this challenge is transformative as well as integral to a major purpose of higher education: the intellectual empowerment of all learners to achieve equity and social justice in a pluralistic democratic society (Weaver, 1991; Hill, 1991; Marable, 1992).

The whole activity of education is ethical and political in nature. History is replete with examples of the ways in which racism persists over time, often in virulent forms (Lipsitz, 1998; Marabel, 2002; Winant, 2004). The legacy of the United States includes the appropriation of Native American land, the enslavement of African peoples, and the exploitation of Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and Latino labor. White power and privilege are maintained through law, politics, property ownership, economic rights, and immigration, as well as organizational policy and social structures (Foner and Frederickson, 2004; Katznelson, 2005).

Questions about the consequences of learning to the individual can always be asked in reference to society as a whole (Freire, 1994; Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner, 2007). Whether or not teachers and learners acknowledge the pervasiveness of

politics in their work, politics is inherent in the teacher-learner relationship (authoritarian or democratic), the readings chosen for the syllabus (those left in and those left out), and the course content (a shared decision or the teacher's prerogative).

Ethics and politics also reside in the discourse of learning (which questions get asked and answered and how deeply they are probed), the imposition of standardized tests, grading and tracking policies, and the physical conditions of classrooms and buildings, which send messages to learners and teachers about their worth and place in society (Shor, 1993). Politics certainly can be found in the attitude toward nonstandard English reflected in the curriculum and in the way schools are unequally funded depending on the economic class of students served. Most important, as Shor has written, "Education is politics because it is one place where individuals and society are constructed. Because human beings and society are developed in one direction or another through education, the learning process cannot avoid being political" (p. 28).

A pedagogy respectful of multiculturalism and ethics begins not with test scores but with questions. What kinds of citizens do we hope to create through postsecondary education? What kind of society do we want, and how can we reconcile the notions of difference and equality with the imperatives of freedom and justice (Giroux, 1992)?

In spite of significant accomplishments in civil rights laws, community activism, and institutional statements and positions committed to racial equality, a far-reaching agenda for democratic pluralism remains elusive. We live at a time when geographical, cultural, and ethnic borders are giving way to shifting configurations of power and community. Education is a global enterprise that requires new forms of solidarity between academic rigor and broader social concerns that affect how people live, work, and survive. From a purely motivational perspective, experience and research teach that motivation to learn among people is vitally released by a vision of being connected to a

larger social purpose and a hopeful future (Ogbu, 1987; Tatum, 2003; Yosso, 2005).

From an educational perspective, achieving a pluralistic democratic society that meets its ideal of equity and social justice is inextricably linked to the pedagogical practices of its educational institutions. An approach to teaching that meets the challenge of cultural pluralism and can contribute to the fulfillment of the purpose of higher education has to respect diversity; engage the motivation of all learners; create a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment; derive teaching practices from principles that cross disciplines and cultures; and promote justice and equity in society. Whether we are discussing numerical, linguistic, or social equations, it behooves us to recall that Germany was one of the most educated and literate nations in the world when its leaders presided over the extermination of 12 million Jews, Catholics, Roma, people with disabilities, and people who were gay, lesbian, or transgendered. The struggle for a pluralistic democracy requires consciousness in political chambers, on street corners, and in classrooms. In his "Letter from the Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King Jr. (1964) wrote, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (pp. 2–3). This is as true for pedagogical practice as it is for global economics.

Educational scholars with the philosophical position of multiculturalism have long advocated for the gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society to be reflected in classrooms (Johnson McDougal, 1925; DuBois, 2005; Dewey, 1933; Takaki, 1993; Banks and McGee Banks, 1993). Their conversations have focused on moral values, equitable hiring practices, and the content of curriculum. Teaching practices have also become the subject of attention. These instructional practices, known as *culturally responsive* or *culturally relevant teaching*, attempt to apply theories about equitable social power or cultural wealth within the context of classroom interactions. Just as cultural wealth in everyday life generates

the opportunity to leverage personal interests, in the classroom it enhances the opportunity for academic success.

Culturally responsive teaching occurs when there is respect for the backgrounds and circumstances of students regardless of individual status and power, and when there is a design for learning that embraces the range of needs, interests, and orientations in a classroom. In other words, an educational system that espouses cultural pluralism also seeks to create learning experiences that protect the knowledge, skill, and experience that learners possess and supports academic attainment and mobility by finding ways for students to develop their strengths. Rising to this challenge is integral to a frequently espoused goal within academia: the intellectual empowerment of all learners to achieve equity and social justice in a pluralistic democratic society (Weaver, 1991; Hill, 1991; Marable, 1992).

These are the essentials of culturally responsive teaching. They foster effective learning for a range of students with attention to the collective good of society, so that systems of oppression, whether they are conceptual or institutional, cannot proliferate. Culturally responsive teaching is guided by a vision of justice and a pedagogy that seeks to transform as well as inform. How to arrive at the essentials of this pedagogy and put them into practice is the narrative of the rest of this book.

### **Understanding a Motivational Perspective That Supports Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Teaching that is inclusive, relevant, challenging, and perhaps even transformative for a range of students has intrinsic motivation as an essential feature. Intrinsic motivation provides a view of teaching and learning that is historically well documented although not widely practiced in college teaching. Researched and advocated within a number of disciplines, it is a cornerstone of cross-cultural studies (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988), education (Vansteenkiste, Lens, and Deci, 2006;



Elliot and Dweck, 2005), bilingual education (Cummins, 1986; Cummins, Brown, and Sayers, 2006), adult education (Włodkowski, 2008), and work and sports (Frederick-Recascino, 2002).

An analysis of the procedural and structural components of college teaching reveals that they largely follow an extrinsic reinforcement model. Teach-and-test practices, competitive assessment procedures, grades, grade point averages, and eligibility for select vocations and graduate schools are aspects of a system of interrelated elements that most students experience in their pursuit of a college education. This system is based on the assumption that human beings will strive to learn and achieve when they are externally rewarded for such behavior. Strongly supportive of this network of incentives is the implied value that individual accomplishment merits academic and social rewards.

Three major issues cause us to question whether an extrinsic motivation model should dominate in college teaching. The first is the well-documented fact that colleges retain and successfully educate a disproportionately low number of low-income and ethnic minority students. Since motivation strongly influences learning, it may be that an extrinsically based approach to teaching is not effective for many students and across many cultures.

The second issue is that because we as college teachers govern the system of structured external rewards, we are unlikely to change our teaching practices. Consequently it is difficult for colleges to shift from monocultural education, an education largely reflective of one reality and usually biased toward the dominant group, to an education responsive to cultural diversity (Nieto, 2004; Alfassi, 2004). From the tendency to (1) reward those who think like ourselves, (2) rely on our own background and education for determining subject matter, and (3) secure the comfort of the controlled, the familiar, and the predictable in our classes, we have little reason to change these habits. They pervade how we specify the content, process, and assessment of

what we teach. As educators, we are gatekeepers who hold the educational rewards for students in our own hands. In terms of our own teaching performance, student evaluations have proven to be inadequate catalysts for change, and few of us are directly evaluated based on the actual learning of our students (Astin, 1993b; Tagg, 2003).

The third issue is that using extrinsic goals to promote learning encourages more shallow conceptual understanding and less persistence while learning than does the use of intrinsic goals (Vansteenskiste, Lens, and Deci, 2006). The negative effects of such extrinsic motivators as grades have been documented with students of different ages and from different cultures (Kohn, 1999). Although this matter is more complex than regarding all extrinsic rewards as controlling or diminishing learning, we agree with Richard Ryan and his colleagues (1999) that people across different cultures are likely to express more satisfaction with their lives when their primary goals and aspirations are intrinsic (being connected, helpful, and self-accepting) rather than extrinsic (being wealthy, famous, and socially attractive).

Another consistent research finding is that when a learning activity is undertaken explicitly to attain some extrinsic reward, people respond by seeking the least demanding and perfunctory way of ensuring the reward (Brophy, 2004). Cramming for tests is an example of this phenomenon that easily comes to mind. Since there are three decades of evidence that dominating instruction with a system of controlling external rewards may contribute to inferior learning, using a pedagogy based on theories of intrinsic motivation appears to be a more reasonable and effective approach to enhancing learning among culturally diverse students.

For these reasons, this book explores and applies theories of intrinsic motivation, finding them to be more informative alternatives for developing an approach to teaching that supports cultural diversity. These theories also promote the creation of teaching and assessment procedures that are open to the voices of students and enhance their learning and involvement.

We can more easily comprehend intrinsic motivation as a foundation for culturally responsive teaching by understanding the relationship of learning to motivation. William Blake believed that thought without affection separates love and wisdom as it separates body and soul. So it is with learning and motivation: they are inseparable. To discuss one without considering the other or to attempt to force them apart ruptures any intelligent discourse and leads to a fragmented notion of what being human might actually mean. Learning is a naturally active and normally volitional process of constructing meaning from information and experience (McCombs and others, 1993). Motivation is the natural human capacity to direct energy in the pursuit of a goal. Although our lives are marked by a continuous flow of activity with an infinite variety of overt actions, we are purposeful. We constantly learn, and when we do, we are usually motivated to learn. We are directing our energy through the processes of attention, concentration, imagination, and passion, to name only a few, to make sense of our world.

In education, psychology continues to dominate the literature about motivation. Yet why people do what they do—the focus of any motivational query—is well within the realm of cultural studies, critical race theory, anthropology, religion, philosophy, physics, and biology. We emphasize this because too often psychology and empirical evidence—using mostly Eurocentric assumptions and values—have become the final arbiters and major decision makers regarding how to teach and, unfortunately, how to label those who have difficulty learning a particular way (Merriam and Associates, 2007). Today's emphasis on and requirements for evidence-based practices throughout education are an evolutionary outgrowth of this perspective and its values. The literature documenting modern psychology provides an incomplete understanding of the many cultural groups that live within the United States (Pedersen, 1994; Hays, 2001). The influences of ethnicity, age, religion or spiritual orientation, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, indigenous heritage,

national origin, and gender require forms of pedagogical innovation that encompass and build on the diversities and similarities within classrooms and communities.

Certainly this is a generative process. As one of many examples of complexity of motivationally anchored instruction, motivation is governed to a large extent by emotion. A person working at a task feels frustrated and stops. Another person working at a task feels joy and continues. But what elicits a response of frustration or joy may differ across cultures, because cultures differ in their definitions of novelty, hazard, opportunity, gratification, and so forth. It is also quite possible for another person with a different set of cultural beliefs to feel frustrated at a task and yet continue with further determination. Depending on the cultural groups with which a person identifies, illness, for example, may be understood from the perspective of germs, God, anxiety, chance, or one's moral failure, and a person's emotional response to illness will reflect these beliefs. Cultural groups vary in their beliefs about the meaning of emotional experiences, expressions, and behaviors (Treuba and Delgado-Gaitan, 1985; Oishi, 2003; Adams and Markus, 2004; Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2004). Since the socialization of emotions is so culturally influenced, the motivational response a student has to a learning activity reflects this influence and its associated complexity. Although we seek to understand, we must admit to only a partial understanding of this remarkable intricacy.

Because there is no science of human behavior with underlying, consistent, unifying principles that leads to predictable results, we advocate that at the very least, teachers accept that each learner represents her or his own reality, especially when it comes to what that individual finds motivating. This form of constructivism does not preclude the existence of an external reality; it merely claims that each of us constructs our own reality through interpreting perceptual experiences of the external world based on our unique set of experiences with the world and our beliefs about them (Jonassen, 1992; Chiu and Hong, 2005).

Given that culture is an influential part of anyone's world, it is rare, perhaps even impossible, for any human being to behave without responding to some aspect of it (Hays, 2001; Tatum, 2003).

Motivation is culturally fused and embedded. Generic motivational goals such as success or achievement and more personal traits such as ambition or initiative may not only have different meanings to different people but may also be undesirable. In this light, influences such as religion, myth, ethnicity, and regional and peer group norms have powerful motivational force. In general, the internal logic as to why a person does something may not correspond to one's own set of assumptions, but it is present nonetheless. Being an effective teacher requires the willingness to understand that perspective and to construct with learners a motivating educational experience. Rather than knowing what to do to the learner, successful educators seek to understand and strengthen the potential for shared meaning. Motivationally effective teaching has to be culturally responsive teaching.

With this orientation, we are less likely to intervene, establish, or determine the learner's motivation to learn and more likely to elicit, affirm, or encourage the learner's natural capacity to make meaning from experience. From this perspective, motivation is seen as intrinsic rather than extrinsic. People are naturally curious and enjoy learning. To be active, to originate behavior, to be effective at what we value is part of human nature (Deci and Ryan, 1991). When one's actions are endorsed by oneself with a sense of integrity and cohesion, authenticity blends with personal values, and intrinsic motivation occurs. When people are feeling insecure or worrying about failure, ridicule, or shame, extrinsic rewards such as money and items that afford power probably have their greatest motivational influence. This understanding lies at the core of the carrot-and-stick metaphor for motivational manipulation. When people are powerless; when they need jobs, promotions, and money; when they are merely surviving, holding on, stopping a downward

spiral, or making themselves less expendable, they may seem less intrinsically motivated to learn. Yet even in these circumstances, it is not uncommon to witness humor, insight, and creativity (Mills, 1991; Ratey, 2001). All human beings have the capacity to make meaning, to become more effective at what they value, and to integrate themselves within, with others, and with the world. With specific reference to communities of color and from a critical race perspective, Yosso (2005) asserts that there are at least six forms of cultural wealth that positively influence learning. Referring to these attributes as “community cultural wealth,” she delineates forms of capital that allow communities of color to persist amid some of the most oppressive circumstances:

- Aspirational capital—“the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers” (p. 77).
- Linguistic capital—“the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style” (p. 78).
- Familial capital—“cultural knowledge nurtured among *familia* (kin) ... in a way that engages a commitment to community well being and expands the concept of family to include a more broad understanding of kinship” (p. 79).
- Social capital—“networks of people and community resources” historically accessed by people of color to attain opportunity (p. 80).
- Resistant capital—“knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality” (p. 80).

How to support and elicit the natural desire to learn that all human beings possess is discussed intensively in the chapters ahead. At this point, however, it is important to acknowledge that motivation is a human characteristic that can be vastly

underestimated and, as with the carrot-and-stick metaphor, is easily manipulated. One of the greatest problems with this metaphor of control is that it is ineffective as a method to enhance motivation for learning. It objectifies people and reduces their humanity. It also contributes to the idea of people “motivating” other people. In our opinion, the question, “How do I motivate these people?” implies that “these people” are in an inferior position—somehow less able and certainly less powerful than ourselves. This kind of thinking not only diminishes acceptance of their perspective but also takes away their ownership of being intrinsically motivated. The attitude of such a “motivator” violates personal determination and tends to keep learners “less than”—dependent and in need of help from a more powerful other.

Replacing the carrot-and-stick metaphor with the words *understand* and *elicit* changes the idea of motivation from one of manipulation and control to one of communication and respect. In the latter case, we may certainly influence the motivation of people, but it happens through understanding another’s perspective and inviting or drawing forth natural and culturally embedded sources of strength. In this way, people are likely to feel empowered, unique, and potentially active. As teachers we may affirm, support, or encourage motivation, but students are in charge of themselves. Through combining our resources, we can together create greater energy for learning. Such a learning environment is neither teacher centered nor learner centered but more community centered, with the teacher serving the agreed-on leadership role.

Since motivation and learning are inseparable, it stands to reason that those who are motivated to learn will learn more than those who are not so motivated. When Uguroglu and Walberg (1979) analyzed 232 correlations of motivation and academic learning, they found that 98 percent of the correlations were positive. Although the sample included only students from the first through the twelfth grades, the researchers found

that the relationship between motivation and learning increased along with the age of the students, with the highest correlations occurring in the twelfth grade. Motivation is not only the energy within learning but also the feeling that mediates learning and the attitude that is a consequence of learning. People work longer and more intensely when they are motivated than when they are not. They are also more cooperative and open to what they are experiencing. Time spent actively involved in learning is positively related to achievement, memory, and recall (Fisher and others, 1980; Zull, 2002).

Because motivation plays such a key role in learning, teaching methods and educational environments that motivationally favor particular learners to the exclusion of others are unfair and diminish the chances of success for those learners discounted or denied in this situation. For example, a teacher who grades students on the basis of participation during discussions and calls mainly on voluntary respondents may unwittingly, yet clearly, favor students who are socialized to request personal attention and offer opinions in front of groups of unfamiliar people.

Any educational or other system of professional learning that ignores the history and perspective of its learners or does not attempt to adjust its teaching practices to benefit a range of learners is contributing to a system of advantage for those who have been socialized to “act smart.” When we understand motivation to learn as a developing trait that influences lifelong learning, we see how insidious such bias in teaching can be. People who eventually find reading, writing, calculating, and expanding their stores of information interesting and satisfying are likely to be lifelong learners (Merriam, Cafferella, and Baumgartner, 2007). The tendency to find such processes meaningful and worthwhile is considered to be the trait of motivation to learn, a propensity for learning, often narrowly conceived as “academically inclined,” that gradually develops over time (Brophy, 2004). This trait appears to be related to a sense of self-efficacy while learning (Bandura, 1997). Such



self-confidence grows from perceiving personal responsibility for learning, accepting challenge through personal volition, and receiving informative feedback, as opposed to arbitrary grades or competitive peer comparisons (Zimmerman and Kitsantas, 2005). Such insights suggest that traditional teach and test methods based on the assumption that people can be motivated by external pressures and sanctions are unlikely to work for large segments of our population. Such practices may also deny many people the satisfaction of a life in which learning is a compelling joy as well as the means to a better future.

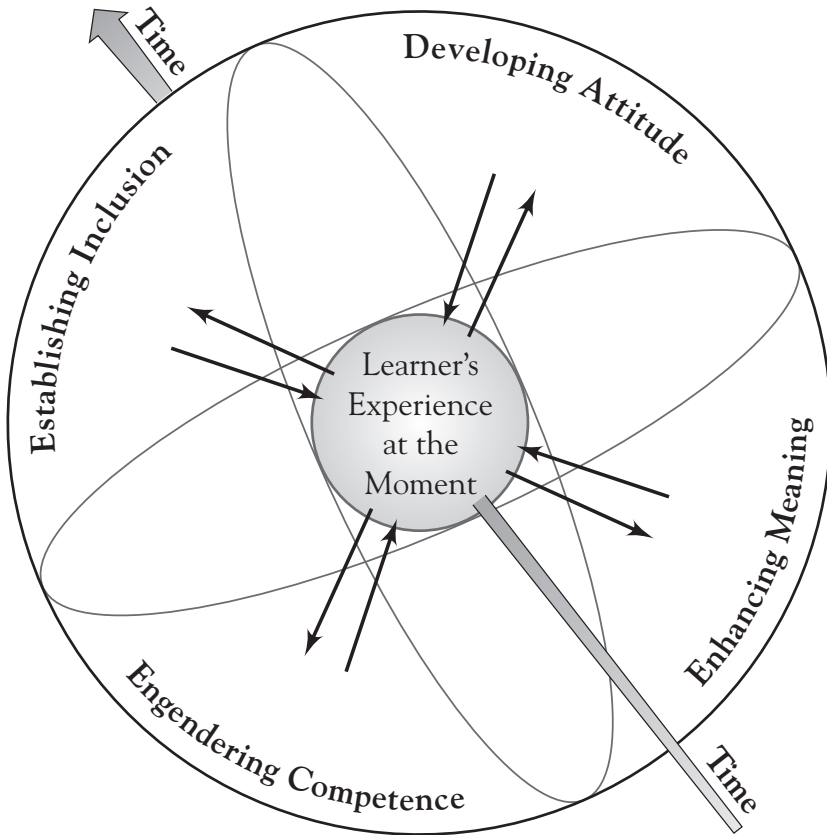
### **The Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching**

An effective model for culturally responsive teaching has to have enough breadth to accommodate the range of diversity found in postsecondary education. It also has to integrate the variety of assumptions from different disciplines. But most of all, it has to explain how to create compelling learning experiences through which learners are able to maintain their integrity as they attain relevant educational success. In this respect, the framework is inseparable from the broader issue of how to construct a world in which democratic ideals are a reality for all.

We offer the motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching as a heuristic to provide this understanding. It combines the essential motivational conditions that are intrinsically motivating for diverse learners (see Figure 1.1). It also provides a structure for planning and applying a rich array of teaching strategies. Each of its major conditions is supported by theories aligned with intrinsic motivation. Each condition's influence on learner motivation is also substantiated by research from the social sciences and neurosciences (Włodkowski, 2008).

The motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching is a way to plan for and reflect on teaching that is respectful of

**Figure 1.1 The Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching**



different cultures and capable of creating a common culture that all learners in the learning situation can accept. It is a holistic and systemic representation of four intersecting motivational conditions that teachers and learners work together to create or enhance:

1. *Establish inclusion*: Norms and practices that are woven together to create a learning environment in which

learners and teachers feel respected and connected to one another

2. *Develop attitude*: Norms and practices that create a favorable disposition toward the learning experience through personal relevance and volition
3. *Enhance meaning*: Norms and practices that create challenging and engaging learning experiences that include learners' perspectives and values
4. *Engender competence*: Norms and practices that help learners understand how they are effectively learning something they value and is of authentic value to their community

The chapters ahead explain and exemplify each of these four motivational conditions in detail. Each of these conditions contains an initial verb as a way of emphasizing its dynamic existence. The conditions are interrelated and reciprocal, affecting one another simultaneously. As shown in Figure 1.1, they work in concert influencing the learner in the moment. However, their effect is usually more continuous and experienced by the learner as an emotional state such as interest or boredom. In an analogous sense, these conditions function like the neuronal networks in our brains.

People experience emotions and motivational influences as a very rapid (in milliseconds) integration of intersecting processes occurring both consciously and unconsciously (Winkielman, Berridge, and Wilbarger, 2005). Imagine, for example, that you run into a friend you have not seen for several years. As you greet each other, many emotions occur simultaneously—joy, sorrow, love, perhaps regret. In that moment, your perceptions of your friend intersect with the recollection of past events. A number of feelings arise from this dynamic interaction. How many of them affect you at this or any given moment? No one really knows.

From Buddha to Bateson, theorists have understood life and learning to be multidetermined. Researchers in the cognitive sciences view cognition and emotion as neurophysiological processes, occurring either individually or socially, that integrate the mind, the body, the activity, and the ingredients of the setting in a complex interactive manner (Lave, 1997; Scherer, 2005). Meeting your friend alone in an airport might be a very different emotional experience from meeting this same person in her home, surrounded by family.

Human beings frequently act without deliberation. Much of the time we experience life as a jazz musician might experience music, improvising with a band. We hear different sounds at the same time, some of which are reciprocal and distinct, a symmetry through diversity. Perception and action are co-creative, each contributing to the construction of the other. Much of the time, we compose our lives in the moment.

There is evidence that in matters as profound as perspective transformation and cultural identity, many people change through immediate action in response to intercultural challenges, with little deep rational reflection and planned action (Taylor, 1994, 2005). Thus, the four conditions found in the motivational framework are an evolving system that reciprocally interacts with and is a part of learning to influence motivation and learning at any given moment.

### **Applying the Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Let us take a look at this framework in terms of the teaching-learning process. In this example, the teacher is conducting the first two-hour session of a semester-long introductory course in research. It is a diverse group of students ranging in age from twenty to fifty-five. The teacher's plan contains the

four motivational conditions with each indicated as a motivational goal with a related teaching practice:

<i>Motivational Goal</i>	<i>Teaching Practices</i>
Establishing inclusion	Randomly assigns small groups in which learners exchange concerns, experiences, and expectations they have about research
Developing attitude	Asks learners to choose something they could immediately research among themselves
Enhancing meaning	Assigns research partners who will develop a set of questions to ask volunteers that will make a prediction about them
Engendering competence	After the predictions have been verified, asks learners to create their own statements about what they learned regarding research from this process

The scenario might go like this. After the teacher has handed out the syllabus and had a dialogue with the learners about its contents, she explains that much research is conducted collaboratively and it is important to get to know each other better in order to create such teams as the course continues. For a beginning activity, she randomly assigns learners to small groups and encourages them to discuss any experiences they may have previously had in doing research as well as their expectations and concerns for the course (*establishing inclusion*). At the end of this activity, each group has a volunteer report a summary of its experiences, hopes, and concerns. In this manner, learners are beginning to establish rapport and trust with one another.

The teacher relates her belief that most people are researchers much of the time and asks the group what they would like to research among themselves at this very moment (*developing attitude*). After a stimulating discussion, the consensus is to investigate and predict the amount of sleep some members of the class had last night.

Five people volunteer to serve as subjects, and research partnerships form among the rest of the learners. Each team is asked to devise a set of observations and questions to ask the volunteers, but no one can ask them how many hours of sleep they had the night before (*enhancing meaning*). After the questions have been asked, the teams rank the volunteers from the most to the least amount of sleep. When the volunteers reveal the amount of time they have slept, the class discovers that none of the research teams was correct in ranking more than two people among the five volunteers. The volunteers then tell the researchers questions they might have asked to increase their accuracy, such as, "How much coffee did you drink before you came to class?"

After further discussion, each learner is asked to write a series of statements about what this process has taught him or her about research (*engendering competence*). In small, randomly assigned groups, learners exchange these insights, which include such comments as, "Thus far, I enjoy research more than I thought I might," and "Research is more a method than an answer."

This scenario shows how the four motivational conditions constantly influence and interact with one another. Without the establishment of inclusion (small groups to discuss concerns, experiences, and so on) and the development of a positive attitude (learners choosing something to research), the enhancement of meaning (research teams devising a set of questions for volunteers) may not have occurred with equal ease and energy, and the self-assessment to engender competence (what students

learned from their experience) may have had a dismal outcome. Also, the future patterns of inclusion (future research teams) have been prepared for, because learners now have a positive common history.

This learning experience, like all other learning experiences, is holistic as well as systemic. It can be imagined that removing any one of the four motivational conditions would have affected the entire experience and each condition's link to the rest of the course. In fact, from this viewpoint, once a course has started, there is not really a beginning or an end to learner motivation. Rather, there is a set of experiences connected through time in which teachers and learners can enhance or reduce the motivational conditions for eliciting intrinsic motivation and for improving learning for everyone.

### **Criteria, Norms, and Practices for Using the Motivational Framework**

Because it is possible to create conditions that suppress motivation and inhibit learning, one can see that care, planning, and sensitivity are important with something as dynamic as motivation. There are no formulas for using this framework because it is a heuristic that is intended as a tool for continual reflection. The questions and ideas that correspond to the framework are intended to suggest and stimulate. With reflection, teachers can use these to redesign their courses, daily instructional plans, and individual pedagogical strategies, such as structuring small groups for problem solving among students.

Returning to the metaphor of a compass, we offer a set of two criteria or attributes for each motivational condition so that teachers and learners can be reasonably sure they are moving in the direction they desire. By using criteria rather than rules, we develop a more multidisciplinary and interpretive

approach to creating the appropriate motivational conditions. For example, for establishing inclusion, the criteria are respect and connectedness. People generally believe they are included in a group when they feel respected by and connected to the group. How inclusion is established may vary greatly, but the teacher realizes that the students' awareness of respect and connectedness is the distinctive feature that determines whether inclusion has actually occurred within the class.

This framework focuses more on the relationship between teachers and learners and less on either of them as individuals. Learning and teaching are understood as reciprocal and co-creative acts. The following four questions that correspond to the framework in Figure 1.1 are essential to beginning and sustaining culturally responsive teaching:

- What do we need to do to feel respected by and connected to one another? (*Establishing inclusion*)
- How can we use relevance and volition to create a favorable disposition toward learning? (*Developing attitude*)
- How do we create engaging and challenging learning experiences that include learners' perspectives and values? (*Enhancing meaning*)
- How do we create an understanding that we are effectively learning something we value and perceive as authentic to our real world? (*Engendering competence*)

These four questions or motivational conditions work together to support intrinsic motivation among diverse student groups. We refer to this as *pedagogical alignment*. We have all been in learning situations where some but not all motivational conditions were met. For example, recall a classroom where there was an exhilarating feeling of inclusion and all students felt safe to take academic risks, yet there were very few challenges to engage



these students. Similarly, there are instructors who work with students to build a learning community in which students are collaborative but use competitive grading that builds distrust and ultimately undermines motivation. A congruent set of norms and practices creates the symmetry to evoke intrinsic motivation to learn.

*Norms* are the explicit assumptions, values, and purposes espoused by a learning group. An example of a norm is, "Everyone has a right to speak from her or his own experience and perspective about what is being learned." Norms work in two fundamental ways. First, they provide an atmosphere and a shared understanding that elicits intrinsic motivation among learners; second, they are the core constructs held in common to build community among learners. Norms not only support certain behaviors but create expectations for those behaviors.

*Practices* are the teaching and learning strategies the teacher and learning group use to work together in order to accomplish the desired learning targets. They are not prescriptive. Rather, they are a variety of approaches, each of which has a theoretical, ethical, and research-supported history of being an exceptionally useful means to engender the identified motivational condition. Because the four motivational conditions work as motivational goals to accomplish while teaching, the terms *motivational condition* and *motivational goal* are used synonymously. The motivational goal serves as a broad, thematic category in which to organize practices to meet its essential criteria. Each practice is a form of deliberate action. By reflecting on it, teachers and learners can think of specific activities that lead to learning as well as to the intended motivational goal. For example, to establish inclusion, the learning group may use the practice of cooperative learning to generate an activity, such as forming dyads, to create a short biography emblematic

of both students' cultural backgrounds. A practice may be used for a small fraction of a course or for the majority of its learning experiences in combination with other practices. The larger the variety of relevant and effective practices teachers and learners know, the greater flexibility they have to support differences among themselves and the topics to be studied.

A congruent set of norms and practices creates the symmetry that enables culturally responsive teaching to evoke and develop student motivation. Because norms support practices and vice versa, all students have a better chance to learn. By following the general example offered below, both novice and seasoned college teachers can peruse the norms and practices found in this book to ascertain their potential application to their own teaching.

A teacher in an urban university begins to plan for an upcoming course. The teacher knows from previous experience that the diversity in the class will approximate a group of students coming from low- to middle-income families, representing a variety of ethnicities, of whom 40 percent will probably be people of color. Age is likely to range from twenty-one to fifty-five. About half the students will be women. There will be a few students with disabilities.

Reflecting on the rich diversity among these students and on the question for establishing inclusion, the teacher studies the criteria, norms, and practices found in Exhibit 1.1 and aims to:

- Make collaboration an expected way of proceeding throughout the course (a norm to build a sense of community among such a diverse group)
- Create a number of learning activities using cooperative learning groups (a practice consistent with the above norm and effective as a method for enhancing motivation and learning)

- Establish participation agreements with the students for the discussion of sensitive and controversial material (a practice to maintain safety and respect while engaged in dialogue)

### **Exhibit 1.1 Criteria, Norms, and Practices for the Motivational Goal of Establishing Inclusion**

*Question:* What do we need to do to feel respected by and connected to one another?

*Criteria:* Respect and connectedness

#### **Norms**

1. Course work emphasizes the human purpose of what is being learned and its relationship to the learners' personal experiences and contemporary situations.
2. Teachers co-construct knowledge that is inclusive of the ideas, perspectives, and experiences of learners.
3. Collaboration and cooperation are the expected ways of proceeding and learning.
4. Course perspectives assume a nonblameful and realistically hopeful view of people and their capacity to change.
5. There is equitable treatment of all learners with an invitation to point out behaviors, practices, and policies that discriminate.

#### **Practices**

1. Introductions
2. Collaborative and cooperative learning
3. Writing groups
4. Peer teaching
5. Opportunities for multidimensional sharing
6. Focus groups
7. Reframing
8. Participation agreements
9. Learning communities
10. Cooperative base groups

Thinking about the question for developing attitude, the teacher examines the criteria, norms, and practices found in Exhibit 1.2 and decides to:

- Conduct the course in ways that encourage learners to make choices about class topics and assignments based on their experiences, values, needs, and strengths (a norm to increase the relevance of the course for such a diverse group of learners)
- Use problem-solving goals and learning contracts (practices to accommodate student choice and to respect their voice in determining topics and assignments)
- Create some learning activities suited to different profiles of multiple intelligences (a practice to more equitably match learning experiences to the wealth of diverse intellectual strengths surely to be found among this multicultural group of students)

### **Exhibit 1.2 Criteria, Norms, and Practices for the Motivational Condition of Developing Attitude**

*Question:* How can we use relevance and volition to create a favorable disposition toward learning?

*Criteria:* Relevance and volition

#### **Norms**

1. Teaching and learning activities are contextualized in the learners' experience and knowledge and are accessible through their current thinking and ways of knowing.
2. The entire academic process of learning, from content selection to accomplishment and assessment of competencies, encourages learners to make choices based on their experiences, values, needs, and strengths.

**Practices**

1. Learning-goal procedures
  - a. Clearly defined goals
  - b. Problem-solving goals
  - c. Expressive outcomes
2. Fair and clear criteria of evaluation
3. Relevant learning models
4. Goal setting
5. Learning contracts
6. Approaches based on multiple intelligences theory
7. Sensitivity and pedagogical flexibility based on the concept of style
9. Experiential learning—the Kolb model
10. Culturally responsive teacher-learner conferences

Continuing with a similarly reflective approach based on the question of how to enhance meaning, the teacher studies the criteria, norms, and practices found in Exhibit 1.3 and decides to:

- Make challenging experiences that critically address relevant real-world issues essential to learning throughout the course (a norm likely to engage the involvement of such a diverse group of students and to benefit from their backgrounds and experiences)
- Use critical questioning, posing problems, authentic research, and case studies for classwork and assignments (practices that allow learners to construct and delve into real-world issues and to use their strengths, experiences, and values to deepen understanding)
- Suggest projects as the main way for students to acquire course credit (a practice with the flexibility and range to accommodate in-depth learning experiences with real-world issues)

### **Exhibit 1.3 Criteria, Norms, and Practices for the Motivational Condition of Enhancing Meaning**

*Question:* How can we create challenging and engaging learning experiences that include learners' perspectives and values?

*Criteria:* Engagement and challenge

#### **Norms**

1. Learners participate in challenging learning experiences involving deep reflection and critical inquiry that address relevant, real-world issues in an action-oriented manner.
2. Learner expression and language are joined with teacher expression and language to form a "third idiom" that enables the perspectives of all learners to be readily shared and included in the process of learning.

#### **Practices**

1. Critical questioning for engaging discussions
2. Posing problems
3. Decision making
4. Authentic research
  - a. Definitional investigation
  - b. Historical investigation
  - c. Projective investigation
  - d. Experimental inquiry
  - e. Action research
5. Invention and artistry
6. Simulations, role playing, and games
7. Case study method
8. Projects
9. Problem-posing model

Finally, with the consideration of assessment and the question related to engendering competence, the teacher peruses the criteria, norms, and practices found in Exhibit 1.4 and decides to:

- Make self-assessment part of the overall assessment process (a norm for understanding the acquisition of competence through the unique and informative perspective of the learner)
- Use documentation of learning based on emerging and completed projects (an alternative to paper-and-pencil tests and a practice that accommodates opportunities to integrate formative feedback and opportunities for students to apply their unique profiles of intelligences)
- Use contracts for grading (a practice that allows for some self-assessment and that can reconcile the many interests, strengths, and needs of this diverse group of students with a fair assessment of their competence)

### **Exhibit 1.4 Criteria, Norms, and Practices for the Motivational Goal of Engendering Competence**

*Question:* How do we create an understanding that we are effectively learning something we value and perceive as authentic to our real world?

*Criteria:* Authenticity and effectiveness

#### **Norms**

1. The assessment process is connected to the learner's world, frames of reference, and values.
2. Demonstration of learning includes multiple ways to represent knowledge and skill.
3. Self-assessment is essential to the overall assessment process.

#### **Practices**

1. Feedback
2. Alternatives to pencil-and-paper tests: contextualized assessment
  - a. Comparing personal assessment values with actual assessment practice
  - b. Generating creative alternatives to tests

(continued)

3. Well-constructed paper-and-pencil tests
4. Self-assessment
5. Effective grading: example, contracting for grades

With the use of these exhibits, the teacher now has an integrated set of norms and practices for creating an overall approach to teaching that is responsive to the diversity of students. In the chapters ahead, we take each motivational goal (condition) and illuminate its social and academic value as we illustrate how to accomplish it with various subjects and in different learning situations. These chapters contain discussions of the criteria for the motivational goals and their relationship to diversity and intrinsic motivation. We will explain and exemplify the norms and practices that contribute to meeting each of the motivational goals, which will provide a comprehensive overview of a motivation-based approach to culturally responsive teaching.

### **Fear, Conflict, and Resistance**

Although the motivational framework is comprehensive and detailed, we know from experience and the literature that not all of the ambiguities, conflicts, and dilemmas that emerge during culturally responsive teaching can be completely resolved. This is as true from the perspective of the student as it is from the view of the teacher. Yet this reality is often more understandable than we might imagine. In the rest of this section, we present insights and cite references that offer pragmatic ways of reckoning with many of the issues that may result from addressing diversity in the classroom.

Knowing that teacher and student resistance is predictable and often legitimate can reduce our feelings of discomfort and help us remain effectively engaged and less reactive in challenging situations. By finding concepts useful for understanding our own as well as our students' reactions, we can be less personally threatened and more open to learning. Let us begin with fear of conflict:



You are teaching a literature course in a large university. You have been careful to include in your syllabus authors from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. At the moment, a lively discussion is taking place in class. You make a remark about the irony contained in a particular author's novel. After your comment, a student who is of the same ethnicity as the author responds, "You don't know what you're talking about. That's a typical white middle-class interpretation." You look up, surprised, but before you can comment, another student calls out to the student who has just spoken: "That's very rude! You really have no right to tell anybody what they know or don't know. Just because you're a minority doesn't mean your perspective is right, either." Immediately four other students jump into the controversy.



This scenario illustrates just a few of the reactions that a teacher who seeks to be culturally responsive may encounter when learners are dealing with situations that touch their lives. Anxiety among teachers about potential conflict can seem overwhelming. Gerald Weinstein and Kathy Obear (1992) speak for many educators when they say:

Our socialization has taught us how important it is to be in control. Our worst fantasy is that the whole situation will go up in flames. There have been a number of times ... when I have felt totally helpless in dealing with certain interactions. A participant may say something that stimulates great tension and anxiety, and a dense silence overtakes the group. The instructor becomes upset and somewhat paralyzed. All eyes are upon us, waiting to see what we will do, expecting us to take care of the situation. I cannot think of any helpful intervention. We are too upset to think clearly. It's a fearsome moment, one that we may anticipate with dread [p. 47].

The intrapersonal emotional dynamics of teachers who deal with bias and conflict are common, expected, and shared—in other words, normal. Those of us willing to assume some of these risks can support one another, teach one another, and reduce some of the misconceptions. Paradoxically it is not uncommon for hope to emerge after an honest discussion about collective moments of despair.

After asking a group of twenty-five university faculty from different disciplines to anonymously respond to the question, “What makes you nervous about raising issues of racism in your classroom?” Weinstein and Obear (1992, pp. 41–42) grouped their findings along with those found by others (Katz, 1983; Noonan, 1988; Cones, Janha, and Noonan, 1983) who had raised similar questions. With subsequent literature in mind, such as considerations for “teaching against the grain” in an institutional context (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Ouellett, 2005), many of the concerns that were initially documented persist. Generally faculty concerns about raising issues of racism tend to revolve around these issues:

1. Confronting one’s own multiple identities and inner conflicts, for example:
  - Having to further probe my own attitudes regarding my group memberships and multiple identities
  - Feeling guilty, ashamed, or embarrassed for behaviors and attitudes of members of my own group
2. Having to confront or being confronted with one’s own bias:
  - Being labeled racist, sexist, classist, or homophobic
  - Having to question my own assumptions
  - Being corrected by members of a targeted group
  - Facing my own contradictions
3. Responding to biased comments:
  - Responding to biased comments from a member of a targeted group

- Hearing biased comments from members of a dominant group while targeted members are present
- Responding to biased remarks from members of my own social group
- Responding to hurtful comments or interactions in ways that oversimplify complicated systems of oppression
- 4. Doubts and ambivalence about one's own competence:
  - Having to expose one's own struggles with an issue
  - Not knowing the most current language being used by those who consider themselves to be "culturally competent"
  - Speaking about equity while participating in a system that perpetuates hierarchical stratification
  - Feeling unable to sufficiently unravel the complexities of issues concerning social justice
  - Having inadequate time and getting sidetracked
- 5. Need for student approval:
  - Making a mistake for which some students may be unforgiving
  - Making students frustrated, frightened, or angry
  - Leaving students shaken and confused and not being able to fix it
  - Worrying about rocking the boat
  - Having discussion blow up
  - Having anger directed at me
  - Being overwhelmed by strong emotions engendered by a discussion
  - Being stereotyped as a bleeding heart

## **Responses to Biased Expressions**

How we approach bias when it is articulated in a learning environment is a theoretical as well as practical issue. Theory offers

a way to anchor consciousness for continual reflection on and interpretation of experiences. An established theory for how people learn in tense situations is similar to any cohesive theory of learning. It acknowledges the importance of safety and legitimizes feelings, and presents the situation as a learning opportunity with important tensions that can lead to understanding. On such occasions, students work collectively to define the tensions—for example, through individual writing and then partnering with another person for sense making. Finally, this sort of experience offers a way to explore emerging issues with other students, colleagues, or perhaps networks using the skills of inquiry. Without a theory, skills and methods that might prevent or diffuse a troubling situation can amount to little more than temporary safety.

Our own theory of action for difficult situations that may arise is the foundation for Exhibit 1.1. In that exhibit, we discuss the need for an environment that promotes respect and connectedness among students as well as between students and instructors. How to understand and promote respect and connection among diverse learners is a question that requires an insatiable quest for understanding students as individuals, ideas about cultural nuance, and willingness to co-construct with students new ways to create a safe space for learning.

In the twenty-first century, many people in the United States believe the playing field has been leveled. In spite of data from education, employment, housing, politics, and health care professionals, there is a pervasive belief that the United States is a meritocracy in which hard work and talent are equitably rewarded. Within multicultural postsecondary classrooms, the contrasts in daily lives among students can vary tremendously. Members of historically targeted student groups often have a long history of dealing with negative cues. A person's reluctance to participate in public discourse on controversial racial issues can be nested in an elaborate understanding of the roots and effects of racism and

the threat it poses within daily life and globally. Although there are certainly exceptions, the color-coded division of communities makes it possible for racially and economically privileged students to make comments with little awareness of its offense. These statements, known as *cues*, signal triggers.

*Triggers* are recurring phenomena in classes. These are words, phrases, or concepts usually communicated by members of historically privileged student groups about a targeted group or individuals that signal the onslaught of highly charged issues. Some are blatantly obvious, for example, “the Jewish media,” and others are a bit more subtle, for example, “I don’t see people as black, brown, red, yellow, or white” or “They’re just not as qualified.”

Triggers may immediately stimulate the defenses of the person whose group is being commented on, or an ally of that group, and can elicit intense emotional reactions. Responses to triggers can be especially volatile in a setting of diverse student groups that includes students who are at the preliminary stage of examining white advantage and privilege. What often occurs is that one person makes the statement that triggers another student to respond in a confrontational or defensive manner. The original “trigger giver” will argue for the truth of what was said or state that it was never his or her intention to give offense and that the respondent seems to be “overly sensitive.” This comment becomes another trigger. The exchange typically continues with a painful and unproductive debate of increasing intensity. It can sometimes lead to a stifling silence or barely controlled frustration—a situation that is troubling for the instructor and difficult to mediate.

While it is important to raise this as an issue that many instructors will experience, this situation does not lend itself to easy answers. Nor should it. Racism and other forms of bias are perpetuated through individual, social, institutional, and global structures. Because it is not merely individual, conversation, even artful conversation, is insufficient. This is one of the

reasons we believe it is important to raise the general issue of triggers at the outset of a course, describe what they are, and describe how they may be experienced differently by members of the dominant and targeted groups.

It is important to handle the discussion of triggers so that the members of both dominant and targeted groups are validated as individuals. Targeted members have a right to ask that others be sensitive to their own language. Members of dominant groups need to understand that their socialization included systematic institutional messages that are larger than themselves or their families. They did not seek to be raised in a racist, sexist, classist, homophobic, or anti-Semitic society. They do not need to be assisted in castigating themselves but instead encouraged to explore, in generative ways, their own origins and beliefs. One measure of success may be the extent to which individuals can self-monitor potential triggers for different groups.

One way to anticipate discussions about racism and social justice even in courses where the subject is not specific to such explorations is to establish communication agreements on the first day of class. For example, many instructors find it useful to introduce the concept of triggers and ask students to supply their own examples before any arise spontaneously. A useful communication agreement might be: "Anytime someone feels triggered, including myself, we can write the example on a sticky note and place it on a piece of newsprint on an entryway door. If we are not able to review the example in the moment, we will save time before the class concludes for that purpose." Not having to deal with the trigger at that moment creates some distance between the person who sent the trigger and an analysis of the response it evoked. The focus can then be on understanding the concept rather than personalizing the issue in ways that might lead to additional vulnerability.

Let us return to the literature class scenario that introduced this section. Without knowing the people or the immediate history of the course, we can say that the teacher at the very least

can (1) give everyone a brief time-out, (2) ask students to record their own immediate responses in their notebooks, (3) provide time for each member of the class to share responses with one other person, and (4) ask for any suggestions or ideas from the group concerning what happened (Weinstein and Obear, 1992). Such a procedure might lead to setting new communication agreements for further discussion and a host of other possibilities that contribute to group awareness and cohesion. We examine this issue in the next chapter.

### **Stages of Racial Identity Development**

Concerning matters of race, a possible way of understanding tension and conflict in the classroom is that it results from the collision of developmental processes that are necessary for the racial identity development of the individuals involved (Tatum, 1992). Although space allows only the summarization of one theory of racial identity development theory, a number of models have been specifically formulated regarding black, white, Asian, Latina/o, American Indian, and mixed-race students (Tatum, 1992; Cross, 1991; Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1990; Sung, 2002). There are also a number of identity development theorists who address issues such as sexual orientation, religion, gender, and geographical and institutional affiliation (Goldschmidt and McAlister, 2004; Sanlo, 2004; Jackson, 2001).

Each assumes that a positive sense of one's self as a member of specific and various groups (which are not predicated on any assumed superiority) is vital to psychological well-being. Furthermore, in a society where racial group membership is fundamentally an implicit or explicit influence on one's lens or worldview, the development of a racial identity will occur in some form for everyone. Most of the theories are stage theories, meaning that they describe metaphorical states of consciousness or worldviews that are developmental in nature. These are metaphorical because none of us is ever in a stage. We

continuously change and grow in ways that are complex, fluid, and braided (Adams, 2007; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Lee and Bean, 2003). Our beliefs, values, and behaviors are always being shaped. This is complicated by the multiple memberships and identities we possess. Metaphorically, however, people usually move from one stage to another when they recognize that their current way of seeing things is illogical or contradicted by new experience and information, detrimental to their well-being, or no longer serving an important self-interest.

Using this paradigm, Hardiman and Jackson (1992, 1997) have created a synthesis from their evolving work on the development of racial identity in black and white Americans. They use racial/color designators rather than ethnic terms such as *African American* to highlight the discrimination aspect of the interactions implied by the model. The following discussion summarizes their developmental framework:

### **Stage One—Naive**

The naive stage of consciousness describes the consciousness of race in childhood when there is little or no social awareness of race per se. Members of both dominant and target groups are vulnerable to the logic system and worldview of their socializing agent such as parents, teachers, and so forth.

### **Stage Two—Acceptance**

In the transition from naive to acceptance children begin to learn the ideology about their own racial groups as well as other racial groups. They begin to learn there are formal and informal rules that permit some behaviors and prohibit others in terms of how the races relate to each other.

The stage of acceptance represents the absorption, whether conscious or unconscious, of an ideology of racial dominance and



subordination which touches upon all facets of personal and public life. A person at this stage has accepted the messages about racial group membership, the superiority of the dominant group members and the dominant culture, and the inferiority of target group people and cultures.

### **Stage Three—Resistance**

The transition from acceptance to resistance marks a period that can be confusing and often painful for both targets (Blacks) and dominants (Whites). The transition generally evolves over time and usually results from a number of events that have a cumulative effect. People begin to be aware of experiences that contradict the acceptance worldview. The contradictions that initiate the transition period can arise from interactions with people, social events, information presented in classes, stories in the media, or responses to so-called racial incidents on campus.

The initial questioning that begins during the exit phase of acceptance continues with greater intensity during the third stage, resistance. The worldview that people adopt at resistance is dramatically different from that of acceptance. At this stage members of both target and dominant groups begin to understand and recognize racism in many of its complex and multiple manifestations—at the individual and institutional, conscious and unconscious, intentional and unintentional, attitudinal, behavioral, and policy levels. Individuals become painfully aware of the numerous ways in which covert as well as overt racism affects them daily as members of racial identity groups.

Resistance can manifest itself as active or passive. For example, for Whites, active resistance may show itself as indiscriminately challenging racism in many spheres and distancing themselves from White culture and people, and simultaneously “adopting” or borrowing the traditions and cultural expressions of communities of color. An example for Blacks of active resistance

might be challenging and confronting Whites, especially those in positions of authority, and challenging or writing off Black faculty and administrators who are seen as not Black enough or as colluding with the White system. Passive resistance appears more unlikely for Blacks than for Whites and usually manifests itself as some form of withdrawal or “dropping out.” Among traditional college-age students, there will be at least some White students and Black students who enter college at the acceptance stage and experience primarily the resistance stage during their college years.

### **Stage Four—Redefinition**

The transition from resistance to redefinition occurs when members of both racial groups realize that they do not really know who they are, racially speaking, or what their racial group membership means to them. At resistance, they recognized that their sense of themselves as Whites or as Blacks has been denied for them in a White racist environment, and they actively sought to question it or reject aspects of it. Now they are no longer actively consumed by rejection, but the loss of prior self-definition of Blackness or Whiteness leaves them with a void.

Whites during the redefinition stage often redirect their energy in order to define Whiteness in a way that is not dependent on racism or on the existence of perceived deficiencies in other groups. There is recognition that all cultures and racial groups have unique and different traits that enrich the human experience, that no race or culture is superior to another. They are all unique, different, and adaptive.

The redefinition stage is the point in the development process at which the Black person is concerned with defining himself or herself in terms that are independent of the perceived strengths or weaknesses of Whites and the dominant White culture. It is here that Black people shift their attention and energy

toward a concern for primary contact and interaction with other Blacks at the same stage of consciousness. They find that many elements of Black culture that have been handed down through the generations still affect their lives, and the uniqueness of their group becomes clearer. They come to understand that they are more than victims of racism, more than just people who are not the same as the dominant group—in ways that engender pride.

### **Stage Five—Internalization**

The transition from the redefinition stage to the internalization stage occurs when an individual begins to integrate some of their newly defined values, beliefs, and behaviors in all aspects of life. When the redefined sense of racial identity is fully integrated, the new values or beliefs occur naturally and are internalized as part of the person.

Indicators of internalization for Blacks include: recognition that their Black identity is a critical part of them, but not the only significant aspect of their identity; and the ability to consider other identity issues and other issues of oppression. Indicators of internalization for Whites include: a clear sense of their own self-interest as members of the White group in ending racism; acting on that self-interest; and not seeing others as “culturally different” and Whites as normal, but rather understanding how White European-American culture is different as well [pp. 24–34].

Racial identity development models can be viewed as roughly outlined maps of a journey from an identity in which racism and domination are internalized to an identity that is affirming and liberated from racism. We strongly agree with Hardiman and Jackson (1992) when they caution against using this model simplistically to label or stereotype students or

others. Most people are in several stages simultaneously, holding different perspectives on the complex range of issues that relate to their racial identity. Such models can assist us in recognizing our own racial identity issues and how they may influence our teaching and response to students. They can also help educators to be less surprised or threatened by the strength and variety of student attitudes, as well as their heightened emotions as they react to cultural issues. By appreciating these developmental processes, we are more likely to learn ways to avoid prematurely stifling, artificially hastening, or unfairly condemning the behavior of students as they grapple with topics and themes that confront their differences.

For courses that address multicultural issues, sharing models of racial identity development with students provides a useful framework for understanding others' reactions. This can normalize their experience and reduce their fears, resistance, and potential resentment. As Beverly Daniel Tatum (1992) writes:

In a course on the psychology of racism, it is easy to build in the provision of this information as part of the course content. For instructors teaching courses with race-related content in other fields, it may seem less natural to do so. However, the inclusion of articles on racial identity development and/or class discussion of these issues in conjunction with other strategies ... can improve student receptivity to the course content in important ways, making it a very useful investment of class time. Because the stages describe kinds of behavior that many people have commonly observed in themselves, as well as in their own intraracial and interracial interactions, my experience has been that most students grasp the basic conceptual framework fairly easily, even if they do not have a background in psychology [p. 20].

Returning to the classroom incident that introduced this section, if a racial identity development framework were understood by the teacher and students, this altercation might have

been less likely to occur. And if it did happen as stated, the teacher would have been more likely to recognize the aggressive accusation as part of a pattern of active resistance by the student, been less surprised by it, and been better able to respond to it effectively. In addition, the student who yelled, “That’s very rude,” might not have done so in the first place, making the entire interaction less inflammatory. There is no guarantee this revision would occur, but an understanding of racial identity development theory does lessen the lack of awareness that can so easily lead to blame and anger.

### **Different Ways of Knowing**

Conflict can also occur because of the different ways in which people construct what they know. Based on their interviews of students as they moved through their undergraduate years at Harvard, William Perry (1970) documented a scheme of intellectual development that described how students give meaning to their experience and understand themselves as knowers. Perry traced a progression from an initial position he called *basic dualism*, where the students view the world in polarities of right/wrong, we/they, and good/bad. The final stage of this hierarchical sequence is *full relativism*, when the student comprehends that truth is relative—that the meaning of an event depends on the context in which the event occurs and on the framework that the knower uses to understand the event. Students are also able to see that relativism pervades all aspects of life, including and beyond the academic world. Students at the lower positions are understood to be more likely to view teachers as authority figures who dispense knowledge. These students tend to understand their role as filtering out the right answers from the material presented. Those at the higher end of the hierarchy are more likely to see their teachers as experts who guide them through a search for the relationships among ideas and information. Educators

have used the Perry scheme as a developmental framework to guide educational practice.

Building on Perry's scheme but realizing the limitations of its perspective—interviews with a relatively homogeneous group of men at an elite university—Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) studied the ways of knowing with women who represented widely different ages, life circumstances, and backgrounds. From their in-depth interviews with 135 women, they found that the developmental stages Perry outlined are far less obvious. Belenky and her colleagues grouped women's perspectives on knowing into the following five major categories (1986, p. 15). These groupings are not fixed, exhaustive, or universal, and similar categories can be found in men's thinking:

*"Silence*, a position in which women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority." They have little awareness of their intellectual capabilities and believe people such as experts and teachers know the truth.

*"Received knowledge*, a perspective from which women experience themselves as capable of receiving, even reproducing, knowledge from the all-knowing external authorities but not capable of creating knowledge on their own."

Other voices and external truths prevail, and the sense of self is often embedded in sex-role stereotypes or in identification with an institution. Their perception of the world tends to be literal and concrete, good or bad.

*"Subjective knowledge*, a perspective from which truth and knowledge are conceived as personal, private, and subjectively known or intuited." For women, this often means a turning away from external authority with the locus of truth shifting to the self. There is a tendency to value intuition over conventional forms of logic and abstraction. It is here women begin to gain a voice.

*Procedural knowledge*, a position in which women are invested in learning and applying objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge.” Women often feel a greater sense of control and seek real-life opportunities to exercise their own authority.

*Constructed knowledge*, a position in which women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing.” In this stage there is the integration of personal knowing with knowledge learned from others as well as the development of an authentic voice.

As they conducted their study of women’s ways of knowing, Belenky and her colleagues documented two distinctive forms of procedural knowledge. Referring to the work of Gilligan (1982) and Lyons (1983), they called these orientations *separate knowing* and *connected knowing*. Separate knowing is based on impersonal procedures for establishing truth, such as the scientific method. It is an orientation where critical thinking, doubt, and rational argument are essential procedures. In connected knowing, truth emerges through care. It is a perspective based on the conviction that the most trustworthy knowledge comes from personal experience. Knowing comes from empathy and reception when people open up to receive another’s experience into their own minds. In connected knowing, people understand others’ ideas in the other people’s terms rather than in their own terms. These researchers believe that connected knowing comes more easily to many women than does separate knowing.

Frequently, as teachers we assert our intellectual authority by referring to research. “Research suggests ...” and “A study has found evidence that ...” are expressions as natural to us as saying hello. Often, for some of our students, what the “research says” is questionable based on their personal experience (connected

knowing). When these learners offer their conflicting perspective, a question can emerge within the class as to which position exerts greater authority. Because of different ways of knowing, debate will not usually settle this issue. Also, in a contentious atmosphere, questions from the teacher such as, "Do you have any research to support that opinion?" often only frustrate or silence rather than enlighten the discussion. To avoid discounting students' voices and encourage constructed knowledge and dialogue, we can ask learners to use their experience to inform our opinions and research-based generalizations as we present them. This approach is likely to lead to a more balanced, and perhaps more truthful, understanding for all of us.

### **Different Belief Systems**

Societies throughout the world differ in their belief systems. Social roles, codes of behavior, and what is considered to be true can vary remarkably among a group of diverse learners, often more so when international students are present. The status of teachers may be much higher in one society than in another. Some students may see important and knowledgeable remarks as forthcoming only from the teacher and not from other students. The roles of men and women may be firmly denied. Even with such a short list of possibilities, one can see how questioning the intellectual authority of the teacher or a procedure like cooperative learning could lead to tension, resistance, or conflict for some students. By studying patterns of values based on belief systems, Geert Hofstede (1986) has found characteristic dimensions that are more strongly present in some countries as compared to others. For example, uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which people within a culture are made nervous by situations that they perceive as unstructured, unclear, or unpredictable. These cultures tend to be characterized by strict codes of behavior and belief systems anchored in absolute truths. To



illustrate, on Hofstede's continuum, Japan is considerably stronger in uncertainty avoidance than is Hong Kong.

Although the unit of analysis to arrive at these characteristic dimensions has been a country, theoretically they might apply to any number of specific populations, including religious or occupational configurations. Different people see and react to the same thing differently for many reasons that are beyond their immediate awareness or control. When we consider racial identity development processes, different ways of knowing, and different belief systems, we see how profound the influences of culture are and how legitimate the sources of conflict within a class of diverse students may be. This is why students must learn to succeed in classes that appreciate diversity. Cultural diversity is central to their future, and they must be able to learn and work with knowledge and skills that accommodate its complexity.

The assumptions we bring as teachers about how people know and how to know are crucial in determining the atmosphere and discourse of learning in our courses. Most interpersonal conflict is caused by different perceptions or understandings of an event, a person, or an idea. When arguments are based on culturally different assumptions such as religious beliefs, two or more persons may disagree without one being right and the other being wrong (Pedersen, 1994). The issues of controversy can range from the morality of capital punishment to the value of particular scientific inventions.

Truth in a multicultural world is not entirely indeterminate. There are facts. Nurturing freedom of expression in a learning environment does not have to be confused with an obligation to facilitate every point of view. But purpose plays a pivotal role. If the goal of a learning group is to deepen its understanding of what the truth may be rather than to find out who knows the truth, then a real dialogue, a "thinking together," is more likely to occur. Under such circumstances, the group has a much better chance to discover insights not attainable individually (Senge, 2006).

Certainly no single strategy works best in all situations of conflict, especially when that conflict is multicultural. There are numerous models for confronting, mediating, and resolving conflict. Most have to do with helping the parties involved find common ground among their purposes and expectations. A well-planned approach and a proactive stance in matters of cultural relations can prevent highly dysfunctional conflict, which threatens to erode the consensus that brings a group together. This is one of the main reasons that our approach to culturally responsive teaching is organized within an integrated set of norms and practices. They form a symmetry that respects diversity while establishing and maintaining a common classroom culture that all students can relate to with integrity.

## **Resistance**

In addition to a complex variety of beliefs, there are many apprehensions toward issues of diversity and culturally responsive teaching that can lead to resistance. However, what appears to be resistance may also be a response to methods of teaching, assignments, and other aspects of pedagogical practice.

From her teaching in predominantly European American college classrooms, Tatum (1992) documents that students frequently consider race a taboo topic for discussion, especially in racially mixed settings. She also finds that many students, regardless of racial group membership, are uncomfortable with an understanding of racism as a system of advantage for European Americans over people of color because it contradicts their socialization to think of the United States as a just society where rewards are based on merit. Gale Auletta and Terry Jones (1994) have found that some students and faculty believe that acts of racial bias must be mean-spirited or conscious to signify racism. They suggest that some portion of the racial uneasiness that may be felt in college classrooms is due to differences in perception about what constitutes racism.

Educators as well as students may remain silent or unresponsive to issues of diversity because of fear of being misunderstood, anxiety about disclosing too much and becoming too vulnerable, memories of former bad experiences of speaking out, fear of creating anger the group cannot manage, confusion about level of trust, and resentment for having to prove one is not “the enemy.” One’s own personal and fragmentary understanding of such matters and academia’s prevailing interest in empirical data can create a quagmire for instructors who lack a nuanced understanding of power as a social, political, and institutional construct. In spite of significant scholarship and frameworks from the social and political sciences (Ladson-Billings, 1996; Lipsitz, 2006; Marabel, 2002; Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Foner and Frederickson, 2004), personal merit in many college classrooms is seen as color-blind, and a discussion to the contrary is viewed as more likely to mislead than liberate ideas.

We agree there are times when history, context, the present-ing issues, and the orientations of people reveal the inadequacy of a reasoned perspective. At issue here is not the rejection of reason but the notion that common notions about reason are inadequate. Art, insight, creativity, humor, intuition, and the spiritual may not be rational, but they may approach a greater wisdom. In certain matters, heeding resistance, putting analysis and the quest for solution aside, and moving on to other ways of knowing and learning may lead to an understanding not otherwise accessible.

Seeing resistance from a number of perspectives helps us to realize that as a human process, it has many forms—that it can be self-protective and personally and socially restrictive—but also that it can reflect perceptiveness and socially beneficial strivings. Most resistance appears to stem from apprehensions about vulnerability or control. Although the advocacy of this book is clearly to change conventional teaching practices, we realize things hardly ever go easily during change efforts. Most college students have gone through secondary schools where

teaching methods still mimic those used in universities. They may not be thrilled about how they were taught, but they adapted, were generally successful by the standards applied, and have formed habits and expectations that may run counter to some of the suggested teaching approaches found in this book. To label their fearfulness, reluctance to participate, complacency, or failure to recognize the need for change as resistance is usually ineffectual. It can divert attention from such real concerns as inadequate teaching skills, dubious assessment practices, or the need for more clarity regarding learning goals. Such labeling tends to be blameful, places more of the responsibility for the solution on the students, and leads to thinking that immobilizes creativity.

We prefer an understanding of resistance as a concern about facing difficult realities that is expressed indirectly. For example, if some students maintain that there is not enough time to discuss a controversial topic when the time is actually available, they are probably being resistant. However, if there really is not enough time for an adequate discussion, they are judiciously expressing a realistic concern.

We do not have a formulaic set of guidelines for dealing with resistance. We have found it to be so contextually determined (who, where, when, what, and so forth) that a recommended series of steps flies in the face of the complexity and variation inherent in this reaction. We believe, however, that presupposing a positive intent of students is vastly more informative to our teaching than focusing on the negative. For example, the perception "Indirectly, we are being told to proceed more slowly and cautiously, to make the situation safer, to provide concrete results" is more constructive than "They only want to avoid; they are cynical; they don't want to do the work." Listening respectfully and soliciting information about the nature of learner concerns usually provides insights. We often ask for examples and evidence of the problem as well as suggestions for other courses of action. We have found that making

simple syntactical changes can make a conversation more open. For example, the use of exploratory language such as, “Suppose we . . . ,” “Is it possible . . . ,” or “It seems that . . . ,” suggests a wider range of ideas and reduces the need for the implied correct response. In addition, using plural forms such as, “ideas, solutions, some factors . . .” invites thinking as well.



In general, gradually shifting toward a more culturally responsive pedagogy involves new and flexible approaches to teaching and intense personal learning. Both teachers and students need to assess such change for its genuine possibilities and to comprehend its effect on their self-interest as well as what they collectively value. Initially there may be little certainty about the kinds of processes or outcomes that may ensue and less assurance that they will be any better than the status quo. These are legitimate issues that deserve careful attention. The chapters that follow are mindful of this inevitable and salubrious scrutiny.

