Currents

In Teaching and Learning

WORCESTER
STATE
UNIVERSITY

TEACHING REPORT

Using the Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching to Guide Assignment Design and Implementation
—Christine Martorana

Assistant Teaching Professor, Department of English, Florida International University

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to: cmartora@fiu.edu

Abstract

This article illustrates the potential for the Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching to guide assignment design and delivery in the college classroom. Specifically, this article discusses the ways in which an upper-level writing course at a Hispanic-Serving Institution utilized the framework to guide interactions on class discussion boards and the design and implementation of a final project called the Visual Snapshot Journal. Throughout the discussion, student work is shared as a way of showcasing the framework in pedagogical action.

Keywords:

culturally responsive teaching, student motivation, intrinsic motivation, personal experiences

In 2018, Florida International University (FIU) launched its Evaluating Teaching (ET) Project, a university-wide initiative that emphasized the importance of effective teaching in student learning and success. A core component of the ET Project is the "Vision for Teaching Excellence", FIU's model for inclusive teaching built upon Raymond J. Wlodkowski and Margery B. Ginsberg's Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching. Developed in 1995, the motivational framework is comprised of four elements: establishing inclusion, developing attitude, enhancing meaning, and engendering competence. As part of the ET Project, FIU offered specific guidelines and practical suggestions for how faculty might implement the framework, including activating students' relevant background knowledge in class discussions and providing students with some degree of choice in assessment methods. In sum, the ET Project encourages faculty to apply the motivational framework to our pedagogical practices so that we might "create inclusive learning environments that leverage diversity, student backgrounds, and lived experiences as resources for learning and success" (Florida International University, 2018).

FIU's decision to prioritize our students' diversity and lived experiences within the ET Project is a context-specific response to the FIU student population. FIU is a designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in Miami, Florida with approximately 54,000 undergraduate and graduate students, over 60% of whom identify as Hispanic. Accordingly, our classrooms are linguistically and culturally diverse, and a culturally responsive approach to teaching makes valid pedagogical sense.

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

I begin with this overview of the ET Project as a means of framing my approach to teaching ENC 3371: Rhetorical Theory and Practice during the Summer 2020 semester. This course is a required course for Writing and Rhetoric majors and for those completing the Certificate in Professional and Public Writing; it also counts towards our pre-law certificate. Thus, although the course is housed within the English Department, it draws students from a variety of disciplines, majors, and tracks. As explained in the course outcomes, the course aims to help students "analyze rhetorical principles, ideas, and terminology in local discourse practice and evaluate the impact local issues have on professional and public discourse." The explicit emphasis on local contexts echoes the ET Project's focus on "student backgrounds and lived experiences," a similarity that I realized made ENC 3371 a good candidate for putting the ET Project, and more specifically the motivational framework, into practice.

In what follows, I share my experiences doing so. I begin by providing an overview of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), focusing specifically on its cross-disciplinary applicability. Then, I introduce the motivational framework as a tool that can support CRT, and I offer my pedagogical experiences implementing the framework in this way.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

First introduced in 1995 by Gloria Ladson-Billings, Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) begins with two recognitions. First, students are not culturally homogenous, and second, learning is enhanced when "teachers utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning" ("But That's Just Good Teaching," p. 160-161). Put simply, CRT makes cultural diversity an explicit component of classroom practices. More traditional pedagogical approaches tend to assume a homogenous group of learners, ignoring our students' cultural diversity. When this happens, not only does it privilege a very specific population of students (White, middle-class, native English speakers), but it also disadvantages students who do not fit into such categories.

By contrast, CRT recognizes the heterogeneity of students in a classroom and takes steps to affirm and value this diversity. As Zaretta Hammond (2014) explains in *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*, CRT "acknowledge[es] the personhood of each student, appreciating all aspects of them especially those culturally specific traits that have been negated by the dominant culture" (p. 94). The teacher enacting CRT views her students as individuals with unique, situated cultural experiences. Her pedagogical practices are "relevant and responsive to the languages, literacies, and cultural practices of students across categories of difference and (in)equality" (Paris, 2012, p. 93). She recognizes that the classroom is comprised of many diverse bodies, each one influenced by valuable cultural histories and experiences.

Given the inclusive focus of CRT, it is perhaps not surprising that scholars from various disciplines have continued the CRT conversation. For instance, scholars discuss topics such as the ways in which CRT aligns with efforts towards more equitable education (e.g., Krasnoff, 2016; Paris, 2016), the value of CRT for English teachers (e.g., NCTE, 2005), the role of CRT in teacher education programs (e.g., Howard, 2003; Paris, 2016; Lucas & Villegas, 2010), and suggestions for enacting CRT at both the classroom and institutional levels (e.g., Austin, et al., 2019; Gay, 2010; Hammond, 2014). Especially relevant to the current discussion is *Currents*' recent contribution to the growing body of CRT scholarship with Jason Leggett's and Reabeka King-Reilly's (2020) discussion of how they use CRT alongside Critical Medial Literacy to "facilitate and engender dialogue [in the classroom] in response to misinformation" (p. 6).

The Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching

One strategy for enacting CRT is the motivational framework. The framework is divided into four equal parts, each one a necessary component to enacting CRT: establishing inclusion, developing attitude, enhancing meaning, and engendering competence. The FIU ET Project summarizes the four elements in the following way:

- Establishing Inclusion: Creating a learning environment in which learners feel capable, respected, accepted, and connected to one another.

- Developing Attitude: Creating a favorable disposition toward the learning experience through

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

personal relevance and choice. It's important that teachers first acquire some understanding of students' existing knowledge of subject matter, interests, and cultural background.

- Enhancing Meaning: Creating challenging learning experiences that include learners' values and perspectives, past experiences, emotions, goals, and an awareness that their state of mind influences the learning process.

- Engendering Competence: Recognizing the varied ways in which students can perceive meaning and authenticity, then developing assessments that account for these differences.

Despite the linear presentation of these elements, the aspects are recursive and non-linear. In addition, as we consider the motivational framework as a tool for enacting CRT, it is important to recognize the strengths-based approach in which this framework is situated. The framework rests on the assumption that the cultural experiences, knowledges, and perspectives that students bring with them into the classroom are strengths that deserve to be respected and cultivated. In other words, rather than putting "students in a one-down position that overlooks innate strengths while creating a sense of dependency" (Ginsberg, 2018, par. 11), this framework recognizes and builds upon the strengths that students bring into the classroom.

Implementing the Motivational Framework

During Summer 2020, I adopted the motivational framework as a pedagogical guide for ENC 3371: Rhetorical Theory and Practice. Not only did this choice make sense given my disposition towards CRT, but it also aligned with the ET Project previously set forth by FIU. Despite the specificity of the ET Project to the institution where I work, the motivational framework embedded within this plan is a valuable heuristic for any instructor seeking to implement a culturally responsive pedagogical approach. Thus, my intention in sharing my experiences using the framework is to offer a model that other instructors might follow to guide their own pedagogies. To focus my discussion, I share the ways in which the motivational framework guided two important components of our course: our regular class discussions

and the final project. As I discuss the final project, I make references to the assignment sheet (Appendix A), research categories used for this project (Appendix B), and specific examples of student work.

This particular section of ENC 3371 was a fully online course, which means that the majority of our interactions took place on Canvas discussion boards. Each week, students posted both an initial response and two peer responses to the class discussion board, a recurring exercise that gave us practice with the motivational framework in three important ways.

First, because these discussions asked students to not only understand our course texts but also to share their own cultural and personal perspectives in response, these discussions helped me get to know my students – their ideas, interests, and cultural experiences – an important component to the "developing attitude" element of the framework. In addition, I made a point to respond to all of my students' posts, either by asking follow-up questions or adding an additional perspective to their ideas. This helped support the "establishing inclusion" element by creating an online learning environment in which students knew that I heard their voices and valued them enough to respond. Second, these discussions gave students practice thinking about and sharing their cultural and personal perspectives with our class. As they did so, they made connections between the assigned texts and their own prior knowledge, a practice that aligns with "enhancing meaning." Third, students responded to their peers on the discussion boards, engaging in a reflective practice through which they took stock of their own learning alongside that of their peers – what the framework calls "engendering competence."

Following this format, we completed eight class discussions. Therefore, when we arrive at the final project of the course, students are accustomed to "us[ing] culture to make meaning of the curriculum and their own experiences" (Ladson-Billings, 2021, p. 72), and so the attention to student cultures in the final project offers a natural continuation of this focus. The final project is what I call the Visual Snapshot Journal, a project in which students incorporate both written and visual rhetoric to create a series of three journal entries. Within each entry, students are asked to discuss a scholarly text focused on rhetoric along with specific, personal experiences related

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

to their identity and/or culture. To begin, I ask students to look at a list of readings and select one with an explicit personal connection to their identity or cultural community (see Appendix A). I organized the readings into eight cultural categories, including African/African-American, Asian/Asian-American, Hispanic, LGBTQ+, Religious/Spiritual, Feminist, Multilingual, and Crafting (see Appendix B).

In order to help students engage with the category they select, I ask them to complete an exploratory discussion board in which they find and analyze a visual text related to their selected category. As an example, I tell students that if I choose "Religious/Spiritual Cultures" as my category, I might find an editorial cartoon that focuses on the particular religion with which I identify. After students locate a visual text, we discuss the potential for representations to impact our understanding of identity. I then ask students to respond to five specific questions and post their responses along with their visual texts to our class discussion board:

1. Which category have you chosen? What is your personal connection to this particular category?
2. How is the particular identity or cultural community being represented in this visual text? Is the representation favorable or derogatory? What biases, stereotypes, and/or norms are promoted?
3. Consider what we **can** see within this visual text (i.e., people, locations/places, other visible items). What message(s) are being communicated about this identity or cultural community?
4. Consider what we **cannot** see – what is missing or absent from this text? Based on your own experiences, what aspect(s) of this identity or community are not represented?
5. Reflect on this quote from our reading: "We learn who we are by how we are represented. […] We construct an identity for ourselves based on…images. Our feelings of who we are become deeply influenced by how we identify with images or symbols" (p. 300). Based on your responses to the above questions, what messages does this visual text send about your identity and/or culture? What feelings does this elicit? Do you feel that this text is an accurate and/or positive representation? A harmful and/or biased representation? Something else?

My intention in beginning our final project with this discussion board is to provide a guided entry point for students to begin exploring the cultural category they've selected. I want students to approach this category from two related perspectives: first, from a public perspective – students consider the rhetoric that circulates about this community in a public, visual text; second, from a personal perspective – students examine their own reactions to such rhetoric, in particular the ways in which their own experiences align with and/or challenge these messages.

Following this discussion, I tell students that they are welcome to integrate what they posted on the discussion board into their final project. In this way, the discussion board assignment acts as a form of brainstorming for the larger project. Additionally, not only does this assignment provide a low-stakes way for students to begin working on their final project, but it also aligns with the motivational framework by inviting students to use their prior knowledge as a lens for analysis and to engage with topics of direct personal relevance.

The next step of the project is for students to post drafts of their project introductions to a class discussion board. It is important that students write their introductions at this early stage of the project. That is, because the conclusion component of the project asks students to reflect on how the ideas they express in their introductions have changed as a result of completing the three journal entries, it is necessary that students write the introduction to their projects prior to completing any journal entries.

Not only is the timing important, but what happens to the introductions after they are written is also significant. First, I ask students to share their introductions with the class. This pedagogical decision helps establish inclusion by communicating to students that their ideas and experiences are valuable and worth sharing. Then, I ask students to respond to what their peers have posted. Specifically, I ask them to focus on connections between their ideas and those of their peers, new perspectives they might offer their peers, and/or new perspectives their peers have offered to them. These peer responses help enhance meaning by inviting students to put their own perspectives and experiences in conversation with

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

those of their peers, a move that posits the students' experiences worthy of critical response and engagement.

Next, students work on completing their final projects. To illustrate the ways in which this final project aligns with the motivational framework, I will discuss each element of the framework individually. This is not to suggest that the framework is comprised of four sequential steps; rather, by separately analyzing each aspect of the framework, I aim to highlight the ways in which each element functions within the assignment to support CRT. As I discuss each aspect, I begin with the summaries offered by the FIU ET Project as a guiding mechanism, and I reference specific Visual Snapshot Journals created by three of my previous students: Frank, Katy, and Jazmin. I spotlight these particular student projects because they are representative of the type of work students created in the course and each student agreed to be interviewed regarding their experiences with the Visual Snapshot Journal.

Establishing Inclusion: Creating a learning environment in which learners feel capable, respected, accepted, and connected to one another.

This aspect of the framework is rooted in respect and connectedness, the goal of which is to create an inclusive learning community for students. When used in support of CRT, inclusion is not established by minimizing cultural differences in an effort to highlight similarities among students. Instead, inclusion is created by explicitly recognizing diverse student cultures, by finding ways to "systematically include student culture in the classroom as authorized or official knowledge" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 483). One way that the Visual Snapshot Journal does this is through a list of readings I provide for the students at the start of the project (see Appendix B). This list includes more than 40 readings grouped into eight cultural categories. All of the readings included on the list are academic, peer-reviewed texts, and many have been written by scholars who identify as members of that particular culture.

By presenting published work related to student cultures and, in most cases, composed by members of those cultures, this assignment presents diverse cultural knowledge as a respected form of knowledge within academia. All of the readings on the list carry with them academic endorsement, and while this is not the highest or only way of sanctioning knowledge, it is one way of authorizing student cultures in the classroom. In this way, student cultures are viewed as areas worthy of academic study rather than in conflict with academia. Students are thereby invited to see that "their authentic [cultural] selves are endorsed," which is a prerequisite for establishing inclusion (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995, p. 63). By making purposeful pedagogical decisions that highlight the validity and legitimacy of student cultures, we can work towards an inclusive learning experience wherein various student cultures are respected and legitimized. Students can then feel connected to one another not necessarily by similar or shared cultures, but rather by the shared recognition that diverse cultures are respected and valued.

Our class discussion boards promote inclusion by valuing student cultures and recognizing the validity in students' prior knowledge. The list of readings I offer for this final project is designed to further support these efforts. In fact, I have found that the list itself is a powerful component of this project. Although I could task students with naming their own cultural connection and finding a relevant reading without the assistance of a list, my experiences suggest it is impactful for students to see diverse categories and readings listed. This is because the list of cultural communities invites students to consider the existence of communities they might not have otherwise considered if they were only focused on their own identities. In short, the list acts as a tool through which students can gain a more expansive cultural awareness.

As evidence of this, we can look to a comment Jazmin offers when reflecting upon her reaction to seeing the list for the first time: "What I love[d] about [the list] is how it recognize[d] the existence of cultures I didn't know much about and create[d] empathy. Including and respecting various diverse cultures in the classroom is refreshing and enlightening." Importantly, Jazmin says she gained an awareness around "cultures [she] didn't know much about" and recognizes her own lack of knowledge about the various cultures on the list. This recognition is integral to creating an inclusive learning community within the culturally responsive classroom. This is because inclusion within CRT is not established by glossing over cultural differences. Rather, inclusion

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

within CRT is fostered by highlighting cultural differences. It is inclusion that stems from the shared recognition that diverse student cultures are authorized and respected in the classroom. Thus, it is in the very recognition of cultural differences wherein a culturally responsive, inclusive learning community can take root.

Developing Attitude: Creating a favorable disposition toward the learning experience through personal relevance and choice.

This aspect of the framework is rooted in choice and personal relevance, the goal of which is to position students as active decision-makers in the learning process and therefore motivated to continue that process. Put another way, by "promoting choice and a sense of agency" (Ginsberg and Wlodkowski, 2019, p. 59), instructors can help students feel engaged with and invested in the classroom. Students then become active participants in their own learning, the intention of which is to create the conditions for them to feel positive about and motivated to continue their learning.

When coupled with the purposeful inclusion of student cultures described in the section above, this aspect of the framework directly supports CRT. That is, when pedagogical decisions simultaneously authorize student cultures within the classroom *and* promote student choice, learning becomes "contextualized and anchored in the personal, communal, and cultural meanings of the learner" (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995, p. 112). Put simply, cultural relevancy becomes situated in students' individual, lived experiences. Learning becomes not only culturally relevant, but also student specific. By giving students the opportunity to make choices informed by what they deem to be significant, we move away from a "static conception of what it means to be culturally relevant" (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 77). Instead, we approach cultural relevancy as a dynamic and student-specific component of the classroom, an approach that contributes to students' positive attitudes by giving them the opportunity to personalize and contextualize their learning.

There is also a practical aspect to offering student choice: "From a purely functional standpoint, we as teachers cannot possibly be aware of all the different experiences and backgrounds of our diverse students"

(Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995, p. 119). Put simply, it is not realistic for instructors to be experts in all of the student cultures represented in our classrooms. Not only is this impractical, but it is not the goal of CRT; instead, CRT recognizes that students are the experts of their own cultural experiences. Since students are "the people who experience and practice culture in their own lives" (Leggett and King-Reilly, 2020, p. 7), assignments rooted in CRT should provide opportunities for students to choose for themselves what they deem personally and culturally relevant.

The Visual Snapshot Journal encourages students to make such choices during two stages of the project. First, students choose the specific cultural category they want to explore from the aforementioned list. As a class, we discuss the fluidity of the list from several different perspectives. We discuss the likelihood that each of us identifies with more than one of the cultures on the list and the ways in which the categories are not mutually exclusive. Frank, for example, chose the Hispanic cultures category for his project. However, as he explains, this is not the only category with which he identified: "I could have also identified with Multilingual cultures. I ultimately chose the other category because while I may be characterized as bilingual, I don't believe that portrays much of my history or individual personality, something that being Hispanic does. While being bilingual may provide insight into some things [about me], being Hispanic does so a lot more." As Frank explains, he felt that the Hispanic category more thoroughly reflected his "history and individual personality;" thus, he made a choice at the start of the project that allowed his learning to be more personally relevant and meaningful.

In addition, we discuss that this list of categories is incomplete – no list could ever encompass every possible cultural category – and I make sure students know they can tell me if they'd like to explore a category that is not listed. One student took me up on this offer and asked if he could explore the gaming community. Relatedly, Katy responded to this by stating that she preferred the term Latinx to Hispanic and opted to use this term to characterize the category she chose. We further discuss the fluidity of this list by recognizing that many of the suggested readings fit under two or more of the categories. For example, "'Para la Mujer': Defining a Chicana Feminist Rhetoric at the Turn of the Century"

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

is listed under the Hispanic category; however, it could have also appeared under the Feminist or Multilingual categories. Similarly, "'To Protect and Serve': African American Female Literacies" appears under the Feminist category, but it is also connected to the African/African-American category.

My intention in highlighting the fluidity of this list is to help students see that the choices they make at this stage of the project are choices about what feels meaningful and relevant to them at that particular moment, not choices that signify one culture as more or less important to them than another. This aligns with Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's (1995) claim that positive attitudes are best developed when students "make real choices based on their experience, values, needs, and strengths" (p. 119). My experiences with the Visual Snapshot Journal add to this claim by conceptualizing "real choices" as choices that reflect where students are in the current moment of choosing.

After students decide the category they want to explore, they then choose which of the articles from the list they want to use for their project. Here again, students are encouraged to be active participants in their own learning, deciding for themselves which specific text they find relevant and meaningful. Jazmin chose to work with the Hispanic category because she identifies as Hispanic. Interestingly, the specific article she chose within that category is about Mexican youth, and she does not identify as Mexican. She explains what prompted her to make this choice:

> The reason I chose to do my project on [this article] is because of how the article reminded me so strongly of my friend. The article spoke about how political rhetoric had an effect on Mexican youth in America. Despite not being Mexican, I saw how heavily it affected my friend's life. When we would hang out, she would express her frustration and anxiety about how she was being represented in the media. Not only that, but when Trump decided to lump all Hispanic cultures into the Mexican one, I was mistakenly labeled Mexican and received some of the aggression they were faced with. I was not the only one, this happened to many other Hispanic cultures. That's what spoke to me the most.

Jazmin's explanation reveals that the choices she made at this stage of the project were impacted by current events in her life – what she and her friend had recently experienced. The choices embedded within the Visual Snapshot Journal allowed her to be an active contributor to her own learning and choose an article that felt currently relevant to her. She goes on to explain that this article "seemed like commonsense because it matched experiences that [she] already had, [which] impacted [her] attitude towards the project and [her] motivation to work on the project. Because [she] felt that [she] could talk on this subject, [she] felt more confident writing about it." Here, Jazmin's comments echo one of the main tenets of CRT: when students make meaningful and personally relevant choices, they develop a more positive attitude towards their learning and are therefore more motivated to engage with the learning experience.

Enhancing Meaning: Creating challenging learning experiences that include learners' values and perspectives, past experiences, emotions, goals, and an awareness that their state of mind influences the learning process.

This aspect of the framework is rooted in engaging with students' prior knowledge, the goal of which is to enhance understanding of course material. In their discussion of this aspect of the framework, Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) explain that one way of engaging students in challenging learning is by encouraging "knowledge building" rather than the one-way communication of "authoritarian truths" from instructor to student (p. 174). They further explain this approach as an "authentic dialogue" between instructor and student "where teachers and learners are involved in a co-learning process" (p. 174). By engaging in collaborative dialogue, students and instructors work together to build a deepened understanding of course material.

My experiences with the Visual Snapshot Journal suggest that instructor-student dialogue is not the only way of encouraging collaborative "knowledge building" in the classroom. Another way of doing so is by inviting students to use their personal, cultural experiences to dialogue with course material. This approach positions students as individuals with valuable cultural experiences as a vehicle for engaging them as students in challenging learning. That is, by asking students to put their first-

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

hand, cultural experiences in dialogue with published texts, we can use the personal as an entry point for student engagement with academic scholarship. We can, as Education scholar Randy Bomer (2017) describes, encourage students to "trail with them into the curriculum their kitchens, their celebrations, their language, and their relationships" (p. 14).

It is important to note that this approach to "knowledge building" does not ask students to find places where their personal experiences align with what the texts say. Although it could be beneficial for students to identify areas of agreement with published texts, this approach might be better conceived as knowledge confirming rather than knowledge building. In other words, when students find areas in which their personal experiences agree with and/or support the texts, they are using their personal experiences to confirm what the texts say. However, when students add to or challenge what the texts say, then they are engaged in knowledge building. That is, they use the texts as springboards upon which to construct new knowledge.

The Visual Snapshot Journal facilitates this by asking students to survey the texts for the voices, ideas, and/or experiences that are not present, and then consider the ways in which their own personal, cultural experiences might fill in the gaps or present a missing perspective. This is a challenging task because it asks students to move beyond surface-level text comprehension and instead practice what Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) describe as the "analytic habits of thinking, reading, writing, speaking, or discussing that go beneath surface impressions" (p. 165).

We can see this aspect of the Visual Snapshot Journal in action in one of the journal entries Frank wrote for his project. Frank chose to focus on the article "The Crossing as Constitutional Rhetoric: Balsero Art and Identity from Cuban Refugee Camps and Implications for Cuban-American Relations" by Shannon Howard (2016). In the first journal entry of his project, Frank focuses on Figure 3 in Howard's article – a drawing titled "Children's art from Guantanamo." This drawing, created by a child artist, depicts a person with a frown on their face, sitting in a chair surrounded by barbed wire and water. The word 'libertad' is written above their head, crossed out by a solid black line. In her

description of the drawing, Howard writes, "Children's art from Guantanamo also depicts the dream of freedom as possible but illusory since chains and fences barricade the way. The water itself is not a source of anxiety or separation from the United States, even though crossing it is dangerous. Here, barbed wire, not water, separates the refugee from freedom, or "libertad" (par. 7).

As explained on the assignment sheet (see Appendix A), each journal entry is required to include both written and visual components, and I encourage students to use the journal entries as places where they might add to or challenge what the texts say. In his journal entry, Frank does just this – offering what he calls "the antithesis to the struggles of those in Guantanamo Bay." He begins his journal entry by sharing a photo he took during one of the first times he flew in an airplane (see Figure 1). In the written component that follows, Frank reflects on his own experiences leaving Cuba and describes the ways in which his photo presents a perspective not discussed in Howard's article:

Instead of risking my life by coming to the United States by boat, I legally arrived here by plane. This picture is one of the first times I ever flew, and though I did not have a phone to take a picture of my actual first time, every time I see the sky above the clouds, I am transported back to the journey that started it all. While sitting in my passenger seat, nothing really is

Figure 1

The photo Frank references

stopping me from reaching the land across the see. [Howard] discusses how the sea is no longer the true impediment for those trying to leave Guantanamo, instead it [is] the black wires that surround them. […] The black wires that these children discuss in their picture is miles below me, as I freely fly across it. Thus, struggles…mentioned
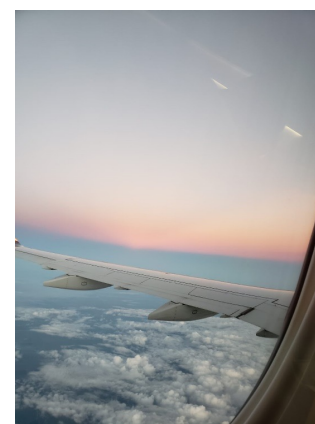
Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

in the passage are far past me, I am on a one-way trip to the end of my journey. Instead of having to face the harsh reality of incarceration and the concession of one's hope…I am too quickly (about an hour and a half) taken to my destiny to even delve on these subjects.

Here, Frank presents a perspective about traveling from Cuba to the United States that is different than the one depicted in Howard's article. Specifically, in the first sentence of his entry, he juxtaposes a life-threatening and illegal boat ride with a safe and legal airplane ride. He writes about the ways in which his experiences were markedly different than those in the text, using this journal entry as a space to offer a different reality than the "harsh reality of incarceration" described by Howard. Frank puts his personal experiences in conversation with the published text to present a new perspective of what it can mean to come from Cuba to the United States. Put simply, he engages in knowledge-building.

As a result, Frank comes to a deeper understanding of the text itself. This is evidenced in the remainder of his journal entry. After describing the photo, he continues reflecting on Howard's article alongside his first-hand experiences leaving Cuba, focusing specifically on "the black wires that these children discuss in their pictures." At the beginning of his journal entry, he writes that the black wires are miles below him as he freely enters the United States. As the journal entry continues, he further explores the possible meaning of the "deterrent image of the black wires" and the ways in which the Cuban children seem to "define themselves by their lack of power in the face" of these wires. Here, Frank positions himself outside of these wires, different from the Cuban children unable to freely enter the United States.

However, as he continues writing, there is a noticeable shift in his perspective. That is, rather than continuing to see his experiences as "the antithesis to the struggles of those in Guantanamo Bay," he begins to consider the ways in which his experiences entering the United States, although different than those of the Cuban children about which Howard writes, offer more than "the antithesis." Instead, he recognizes the ways in which his experiences and those of the children are similarly defined by power: the absence

of power for the children and the presence of power for himself. He acknowledges his own power in flight compared to the children's lack of power on the water. This is "the antithesis" about which he first writes. However, his understanding of power does not end with a recognition of the power differential. Instead, throughout his writing, Frank continues exploring this concept of power, and ultimately concludes that power – whether it is the presence of power or the absence of power – undergirds and shapes his experience in flight just as it shaped the children's experiences on the water. "Culture permeates every individual within it," Frank writes, and "analogous feelings of power are what ties [Cubans] together." This recognition of a Cuban culture joined together by "analogous feelings of power" illustrates a deepened engagement with our course material. This engagement comes from Frank putting his own experiences in dialogue with those described in the text, the result of which is knowledge-building anchored in one student's particular cultural experiences.

Engendering competence: Recognizing the varied ways in which students can perceive meaning and authenticity, then developing assessments that account for these differences.

This aspect of the framework is rooted in meaningful and student-specific learning, the goal of which is to help students recognize and see value in their own growing competence. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) discuss this aspect of the framework in terms of authentic assessment, the primary goal of which "is to *engender* competence" (p. 231). This is an important distinction from traditional conceptions of assessment which focus on measuring what students know/do not know. Authentic assessment, on the other hand, aims to foster within students an awareness of their own competence. In this way, authentic assessment offers a vehicle through which students can recognize, make explicit, and value their own learning. It is not something that is done to students; rather, it is something that students participate in and, at times, even lead. In addition, because authentic assessment is rooted in students' awareness of their growing competence, it moves beyond dualistic conceptions of right/wrong. Specifically, it "allow[s] for personal interpretations of 'truth' - that

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

is, linkages between traditional academic perspectives and personal experiences and the generation of valid alternative perspectives to conventionally held beliefs" (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995, p. 237). This move towards plural, diverse understandings aligns with CRT by situating learning and knowledge within students' personal, individualized experiences.

Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) offer several approaches to authentic assessment, one of which is self-assessment. Self-assessment practices, they explain, ask students to take stock of their own understanding so that they might value their learning and who they are as learners. Additionally, because self-assessment can "support and illuminate the learner's authority, strength, and sense of cultural and academic identity" (p. 233), self-assessment offers a valuable way of enacting CRT. Through self-assessment, students can come to the realization that the knowledge they have gained through their cultural experiences is integral to their competence. This realization helps "students to validate their [own] authenticity as learners and as human beings, [which] is especially important for underrepresented students who may feel, at times, like imposters in the culturally isolated…universe of academia" (p. 240). Thus, self-assessment can be an effective avenue for engendering competence in the culturally responsive classroom.

The Visual Snapshot Journal offers one example of how an assignment can utilize self-assessment. Specifically, we see this aspect of the framework in the introduction and conclusion that students write to bookend their journal entries. The introduction is where students introduce the specific text they have chosen for this project and then respond to one of the main themes from our course. The conclusion, on the other hand, is an opportunity for students to reflect on the journal entries that comprise their Visual Snapshot Journal and write about the ways in which the ideas shared in these entries add to, build upon, and/or challenge the perspectives shared in the introduction. As such, the conclusion is where self-assessment occurs. This is because in order to write the conclusion, students must first consider what they wrote in their introductions alongside the content of their journal entries. They must reread their introduction to get a sense of their initial understandings, and then consider

how the personal, cultural experiences they spotlight in each journal entry interact with these early perspectives. As they engage in this rereading and reflection process, students are asked to recognize their own learning and growing competence, and the conclusion is where they make this recognition explicit.

Katy's project offers an example of this form of self-assessment. In her introduction, Katy responds to question #2 - *How does rhetoric (visual, written, and/or spoken) empower some voices/perspectives and silence others?* Focusing specifically on what she describes as the "hateful rhetoric directed towards Latinx people," Katy observes that "although this hate has been ever present for decades, President Trump's rhetoric when speaking about Latinx culture and immigrants in the Latinx community has amplified and empowered the voices of xenophobic and racist citizens in the United States, while simultaneously silencing those most impacted by it: members of the Latinx community." Here, in her introduction, Katy writes about the ways in which this hateful rhetoric silences the Latinx community. This is significant to notice because although question #2 invites her to also consider how rhetoric can *empower* voices and perspectives, her attention at this point remains solely on the potential for rhetoric to silence and oppress.

However, Katy's conclusion illustrates a shift in her understanding. That is, instead of focusing only on the "hateful rhetoric directed towards Latinx people," Katy considers the potential for rhetoric to positively impact the Latinx community. She explains that writing the journal entries helped her arrive at this revised understanding:

> This research project allowed me to analyze and interpret the different ways that rhetoric can impact communities. […] It can have tangible effects on real lives and real people, whether they be positive or negative. In my research, I chose to focus on a community that I am very proud to be a part of: the Latinx community. […] Oftentimes, the media and political rhetoric play a huge role in how the Latinx community is portrayed, seen, and even treated here in the United States; many would agree that most coverage of the Latinx community

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

is negative coverage. Because of this, I chose to highlight a more positive side of my community, the real side. In my [journal] entries, I decided to combat negative stereotypes and break down misconceptions. From my journal entries, it is easy to see the ways in which the Latinx community are often silenced by the media due to negative rhetoric and ways in which the community can be empowered by positive rhetoric.

Here, in the conclusion, Katy adds to the concept of rhetoric she presented in her introduction. She returns to the initial question she explored in her introduction and then uses the personal, cultural experiences she shared in her journal entries to build upon her initial response. The result is a more robust understanding of rhetoric as well as an explicit recognition of her own growing competence.

Katy's project illustrates the potential for self-assessment to offer a culturally responsive approach to authentic assessment. In authentic assessment, students are not passive observers waiting to be assessed by an authoritative teacher; rather, they are involved agents, active in the assessment of their own learning. We see this active participation in Katy's conclusion when she assesses her own understanding of rhetoric. Equally important, especially in light of our current focus on CRT, is that Katy calls upon her personal, cultural experiences to inform this self-assessment. She reflects on the cultural experiences she wrote about in her journal entries, and then she uses these experiences to revise her initial understandings. From this perspective, not only is Katy practicing self-assessment, but she is doing so from a culturally aware and culturally validating perspective. She is, as Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) describe, validating her own "authority, strength, and sense of cultural…identity" (p. 223).

Conclusion

Throughout this discussion, I have analyzed the potential for the framework to help instructors embrace CRT, promote engagement with and among culturally diverse students, and encourage students to value their own learning. In so doing, I hope to have provided a model for other instructors interested in pedagogical use of the framework. In particular, I could imagine the Visual Snapshot Journal or a rendition of it being incorporated in courses that discuss culture, power, and language. For

instance, many Education programs have courses that focus on language, literacy, and culture; Communication programs often offer courses that explore the power and potential of mass media; Pre-law students are often required to take a course in civil discourse. In each of these courses, the Visual Snapshot Journal could offer a way for students to explore culture, power, and language from a discipline-specific stance while still preserving the core components of the motivational framework: explicit attention to cultural diversity, emphasis on personally-relevant choices, valuing of students' prior knowledge, and student assessment of their own learning.

As I look forward to teaching this course again, I can imagine productive adaptations and expansions of this project. For instance, in response to Ladson-Billings (2014) suggestion that we push "students to consider critical perspectives on policies and practices that may have direct impact on their lives and communities, […] such as school choice, school closings, rising incarceration rates, [and] gun laws" (p. 78), a future iteration of this project might begin by asking students to first identify culturally relevant policies or practices impacting their lives. We could then identify various texts that discuss these policies/practices, and I imagine that students would turn to mainstream news outlets (i.e., *The New York Times*) as well as culture-specific sources (i.e., *Hispanic Network: A Latino Business and Employment Magazine*). This means that it is likely that students would work with news articles, Op-eds, or other similar sources for the Visual Snapshot Journal, and although this would be different than the academic texts with which my students worked, this seems like a productive revision. That is, by rooting itself in texts that discuss current events rather than academic texts that are often published months or sometimes years after an event has occurred, the Visual Snapshot Journal could more directly connect to students' in-the-moment lives. If this were to happen, the project would not only differ from student to student, but it would also fluctuate based on events happening at that specific moment in time. Not only would this revision increase the relevance of the project to students' lives, but I can also see it offering a productive pedagogical connection for classes that focus on analyzing current events, including those in Political Science, Sociology, Law, and Communications.

In addition, the multimodal aspect of this project offers cross-disciplinary value, especially for courses that teach students to interrogate the power of visual

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

communication. Students in art history courses, for example, might benefit from a project similar to the Visual Snapshot Journal in which they analyze and respond to representations of a culture or gender in paintings from a particular time period, perhaps comparing representations across time periods and situating this comparison alongside more contemporary paintings. Similarly, students in an advertising course might complete a version of the Visual Snapshot Journal in which they consider the ways in which a marketing campaign uses images to attract certain populations of consumers, perhaps at the expense or degradation of others. In each of these potential revisions to the Visual Snapshot Journal, students would select a culture, gender, or population with which they identify so that they would be able to use their lived experiences as a means for response and analysis.

As I conclude this discussion, I have offered several ways in which this project could be adapted, and I am hopeful that others reading this article will be motivated to adapt the Visual Snapshot Journal to their particular context. This would be, after all, in line with the goal of the motivational framework: to elicit motivation in the culturally responsive classroom.

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

References

Austin, D., Atencio, M., Yeung, F., Stein, J., Mathur, D., Ivester, S., & Woods, D. R. (2019). Diversity and inclusion curriculum: Addressing culturally relevant pedagogy and the achievement gap at a racially diverse university. *Currents in Teaching and Learning, 11*(1), 112-134.

Bomer, R. (2017). What would it mean for English Language Arts to become more culturally responsive and sustaining? *Voices from the Middle 24*(3), 11-15

Florida International University. (2018). *FIU's Vision for Teaching Excellence*. Center for the Advancement of Teaching. https://cat.fiu.edu/resources/evaluating-teaching-resources/fius-vision-for-teaching-excellence/index.html

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (second edition). Teachers College Press.

Ginsberg, M. B. (2018, May 16). A motivational framework for instructional equity in higher education. *Higher Education Today*. https://www.higheredtoday.org/2018/05/16/motivational-framework-instructional-equity-higher-education/

Ginsberg, M. B. & Wlodkowski, R. J. (2019). Intrinsic motivation as the foundation for culturally responsive social-emotional and academic learning in teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 46*(4), 53-66.

Hammond, Z. (2014). *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*. Corwin.

Howard, T. C. (2003). Culturally relevant pedagogy: Ingredients for critical teacher reflection. *Theory into Practice, 42*(3), 195-202.

Howard, S. (2016). The crossing as constitutional rhetoric: Balsero art and identity from Cuban refugee camps and implications for Cuban-American relations. *Present Tense: A Journal of Rhetoric in Society, 6*(1). http://www.presenttensejournal.org/volume-6/the-crossing-as-constitutional-rhetoric/

Krasnoff, B. (2016). *Culturally responsive teaching: A guide to evidence-based practices for teaching all students equitably.* Equity Assistance Center.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice, 34*(3), 159-165.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465-491.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: aka the remix. *Harvard Educational Review, 84*(1), 74-84.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2021). I'm here for the hard re-set: Post pandemic pedagogy to preserve our culture. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 54*(1), 68-78.

Leggett, J. & King-Reilly, R. (2020). In the age of fake news: Engendering dialogue and critical media literacy through culturally responsive teaching. *Currents in Teaching and Learning, 12*(1), 6-18.

Lucas, T. & Villegas, A. M. (2010). The missing piece in teacher education: The preparation of linguistically responsive teachers. *National Society for the Study of Education, 109*(2), 297-318.

NCTE. (2005). *Supporting Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Learners in English Education.* National Council of Teachers of English.

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice. *Educational Researcher, 41*(3), 93-97.

Paris, D. (2016). On educating culturally sustaining teachers. *TeachingWorks*, 2-15.

Wlodkowski, R. J. & Ginsberg, M. B. (1995). *Diversity and motivation: Culturally responsive teaching*. Jossey-Bass.

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

Appendix A. Assignment: Visual Snapshot Journal

This semester, we have been exploring rhetoric in visual and written forms and discussing the ways in which rhetorical representations impact how we understand ourselves and those around us. In this project, you will continue this exploration by creating a Visual Snapshot Journal. Specifically, you will select a specific reading to focus on, one that has a personal connection to your identity or cultural community, and you will use visual and written rhetoric to document your reactions to that reading. That is, rather than responding only through words, you will create a visual snapshot journal that spotlights your reactions. Let's begin by breaking down the title of this project:

- **Visual:** communication through images, photos, colors, drawings, graphics, etc.

- **Snapshot:** a brief, focused impression or reaction

- **Journal:** an honest, personal form of writing

Therefore, in this final project, although you will be incorporating both written and visual rhetoric, you will not be writing a traditional essay. Instead, you will be creating a visual snapshot journal comprised of an introduction, three journal entries, and a conclusion. The purpose of this project is for you to think deeply and critically about the connections between rhetoric, an aspect of your identity or culture, and your personal experiences/perspectives.

To begin, look at the potential research categories, and identify which one(s) relate to some aspect of your identity or culture. *(Note: If you'd like to explore a research category that is not listed, please let me know!)* Select one research category that you'd like to focus on for this project, and then look through the suggested readings under that category. You don't need to read all of the readings; instead, begin by reading the abstracts of the readings or skimming through the readings to get a general sense of what each one is about. As you look through the readings, ask yourself, *"What personal experiences have I had that relate to this category and/or this reading? What do I want to learn more about? Why am I interested in this?"*

Then, select one reading that you want to focus on for this project. *(You are also welcome to select a reading that is not listed on the sheet, but I need to approve it first.)*

Once you identify that reading, you should read that text in its entirety, and this will be the text you use for the introduction to your Visual Snapshot Journal.

> **Your introduction** should be a 600-word response to the text you have chosen. In this response, you will first give the title and author of the text. Then, you will summarize the main ideas of the text (approximately 150 words) and then write a 450 words response to **one** of the following questions:

1. According to the text, what is the relationship between rhetoric (visual, written, and/or spoken), culture/identity, and power?

2. According to this text, how does rhetoric (visual, written, and/or spoken) empower some voices/perspectives and silence others?

3. According to this text, how can rhetoric (visual, written, and/or spoken) promote social change or activism?

> As you respond to **one** of the above questions, be sure to support your response by including direct quotes and/or paraphrases from the text. In other words, you need to point me to the exact parts of the text that have sparked your analysis so that I can clearly see the connections between the text you've read and the introduction you've written.

After you write your introduction, you will create your **three journal entries.** The journal entries will spotlight

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

your personal responses to a specific passage from the text you analyzed in your introduction. Each entry should include the following:

- A title

- A visual component (a photograph, a drawing, a graphic, etc.)

- A specific passage from the article (cited in MLA format)

- A written component of at least 200 written words that explains the photo and the ways in which this photo connects to the quote you have selected. For instance, does the visual disagree or challenge the quote? Build off of or add to the quote? Present a new perspective that the quote ignores or overlooks?

An example journal entry is posted on Canvas for you.

After you write your introduction and three journal entries, you will write **a conclusion** (at least 200 words) that makes connections between the ideas you discuss in your introduction and your journal entries. Specifically, in your conclusion, you can discuss how your personal journal entries allow us to more fully understand 1) the relationship between rhetoric, culture/identity, and power, 2) the potential for rhetoric to empower voices and silences others, or 3) the potential for rhetoric to promote social change or activism.

Appendix B. Research Categories

1. African/African-American cultures
   a. "Manifestations of Afrocentricity in Rap Music" (PDF)
   b. #StayWoke: The Language and Literacies of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement" (PDF)
   c. "Racist Visual Rhetoric and Images of Trayvon Martin" (link)
   d. "Equal treatment as exclusion: Language, race, and US education policy" (PDF)
   e. "Remnants of Venus: Signifying Black Beauty and Sexuality" (PDF)

2. Asian/Asian-American cultures
   a. *Representations: Doing Asian American Rhetoric* (link)
   b. "Rhetorical Clash Between Chinese and Westerners" (PDF)
   c. "Engaging Nuquanzhuyi: The Making of a Chinese Feminist Rhetoric" (PDF)
   d. "Affective Rhetoric in China's Internet Culture" (link)
   e. Special issue of *Enculturation* on Asian/American rhetorics (there are multiple articles at this link; you can select an article from this list)

3. Hispanic cultures
   a. "Digital Latinx Storytelling: testimonio as Multimodal Resistance" (link)
   b. "Words Hurt: Political rhetoric, emotions/affect, and psychological well-being among Mexican-origin youth" (PDF)

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

    c.   "Acceptable Heterogeneity: Brownwashing Rhetoric in President Obama's Address on Immigration" (link)

    d.   "The Crossing as Constitutional Rhetoric: Balsero Art and Identity from Cuban Refugee Camps and Implications for Cuban-American Relations" (link)

    e.   "'Para la Mujer': Defining a Chicana Feminist Rhetoric at the Turn of the Century" (PDF)

4. LGBTQ+ cultures

    a.   "Until Death Do Us Part: Lesbian Rhetorics of Relational Divorce" (PDF)

    b.   "*Transgender**: The Rhetorical Landscape of a Term" (link)

    c.   "The Quiet Country Closet: Reconstructing a Discourse for Closeted Rural Experiences" (link)

    d.   "Figuring the Feminist Femme" (PDF)

    e.   "Laughing at Absence: *Instinct* Magazine and the Hyper-Masculine Gay Future?" (PDF)

    f.   "Cracks in the Glass Slipper: Does It Really 'Get Better' for LGBTQ Youth, or Is It Just Another Cinderella Story?" (PDF)

    g.   "Let Me Queer My Throat: Queer Rhetorics of Negotation: Marriage Equality and Homonormativity" (link)

5. Religious/Spiritual cultures

    a.   "The Rhetoric of Religion" (PDF)

    b.   "Talmidae Rhetoricae: Drashing Up Models and Methods for Jewish Rhetorical Studies" (PDF)

    c.   "The Attractions of Imperfection: Pope Francis's Undisciplined Rhetoric" (link)

    d.   "Iqra: African American Muslim Girls Reading and Writing for Social Change" (PDF)

    e.   "Filled with the Spirit: Rhetorical Invention and the Pentacostal Tradition" (PDF)

    f.   "Stepping Outside the 'Ladies' Department': Women's Expanding Rhetorical Boundaries" (PDF)

    g.   "Buddhism's Pedagogical Contribution to Mindfulness" (PDF)

6. Feminist cultures

    a.   "Feminist Rhetorical Practices: In Search of Excellence" (PDF)

    b.   "When they go low, we go high: First Lady Michelle Obama's feminist rhetoric of inclusion" (PDF)

    c.   "'To Protect and Serve': African American Female Literacies" (PDF)

    d.   "'Para la Mujer': Defining a Chicana Feminist Rhetoric at the Turn of the Century" (PDF)

    e.   "Comedy as Feminist Rhetoric, Liz Lemon Style" (link)

    f.   "Blogging Borders: Transnational Feminist Rhetorics and Global Voices" (link)

Using the Motivational Framework *continued*

7. Multilingual cultures

   a. "Translation as Technology: From Linguistic 'Deficit' to Rhetorical Strength" (link)

   b. "'When I Close My Eyes, I Like To Hear English': English Only and the Discourse of Crisis" (link)

   c. "Multilingual Writing as Rhetorical Attunement" (PDF)

   d. "Writing a Translingual Script: Closed Captions in the English Multilingual Hearing Class-room" (link)

   e. "Principles for Cultivating Rhetorics and Research Studies within Communities" (link)

8. Crafting cultures

   a. "Joie de Fabriquer: The Rhetoricity of Yarn Bombing" (PDF)

   b. "Threads of Feeling: Embroidering Craftivism to Protest the Disappearances and Deaths in the 'War on Drugs' in Mexico (link)

   c. "Crafting a Music Community: Making Music and Musicians in Concert" (link)

   d. "Crafting Change: Practicing Activism in Contemporary Australia" (link)

   e. "*Undo It Yourself*: Challenging Normalizing Discourses of *Pinterest*? Nailed It!" (link)

Note: If you'd like to explore a research category that is not listed, please let me know!