



Exploring a New Framework for Teaching Culture

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Abstract

The current reality of global and multicultural interactions through trade, industry, and education requires appropriate cultural competencies to enable a meaningful exchange of ideas and concepts. This reality is especially significant because advances in communication technology combined with ubiquitous and affordable Internet access bring cultures together through a shared purpose beyond the boundaries of geography, education, travel, and commerce.

A deep understanding of culture fosters insight into how one can function more effectively within the aforementioned contexts using principles of cross-cultural communication that are appropriate for a given audience and interaction. An analysis of the current literature related to teaching culture by Ananthanarayanan and St. Clair (2012), revealed a lack of consensus on teaching models for understanding culture across disciplines, which typically target study abroad and language teaching. As a result, we concluded that there is no agreed-upon framework that benchmarks the nature and level of effective intra- and inter-cultural competencies and understanding.

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to describe a new teaching model, Process Model for Teaching and Understanding Culture (PMTUC), that represents a possible universal approach to developing competencies that allow for meaningful and effectual interactions across cultures. PMTUC was inspired by the findings and recommendations articulated by Ananthanarayanan and St. Clair (2012). This model presents a process for teaching culture that is anchored in existing theories from the disciplines of education, cultural anthropology, cultural studies, mathematics, and technology. Specifically, PMTUC is a three-phase model that aligns these constructs into a framework using cultural syndrome formation, constructivism, constructionism, andragogy, country profiles, regional clusters, communication patterns, and societal assumptions and behaviors.

Keywords: Understanding Culture, New Teaching Model, Communication Patterns

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