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Student Motivation

When designing and developing a course, faculty often consider such issues as learning outcomes, assessment, and learning activities, but too often forget to think critically about the issue of student motivation. Most faculty understand that motivation is a primary factor in student learning, but understanding what motivates students to learn may be a bit murkier than we previously thought. For example, we know that extrinsic motivation such as grades, awards, academic advancement etc. seems to work—especially with a culture of students who have achieved success and recognition through such rewards. However, the debate about the merits of extrinsic motivation is ongoing. (Cameron & Pierce, 1996)

Interestingly, recent research supports more intrinsic types of motivation as a way to enhance the learning for the diverse group of students that we teach today. (Lambert and McCombs, 1998) *Raymond J. Wlodkowski, argues that in an effort “...to promote equitable learning opportunities for all students, a holistic, culturally responsive pedagogy based on intrinsic motivation is needed.” In essence, he maintains that intrinsic motivation is directly tied to an understanding that individual motivation is inseparable from culture.

I encourage you to read the attached article where Wlodkowski’s research suggests that teachers create a Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching. In so doing, “...teachers and students can create or enhance:

- *Establishing inclusion*: Creating a learning atmosphere in which students and teachers feel respected and connected to one another
- *Developing attitude*: Creating a favorable disposition toward the learning experience through personal relevance and choice
- *Enhancing meaning*: Creating challenging, thoughtful learning experiences that include students’ perspectives and values
- *Engendering competence*: Creating an understanding that students are effective in learning something they value

What Wlodkowski argues for is that “...motivational planning should be integrated with instructional planning.” He gives a good example of how motivational planning can be incorporated into a research course. Enjoy the reading and stay tuned for a spring workshop that will go into this topic in more depth.