The Need for Culturally Sensitive Curriculum for Spanish-Speaking Students at the University of South Carolina Beaufort

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Global Business Languages (2009)

Charles Calvert
Dean Cleavenger
Sean Barth
John Salazar
University of South Carolina Beaufort

THE NEED FOR
CULTURALLY SENSITIVE CURRICULUM
FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA BEAUFORT

The University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) has long held the philosophy that the most enriching educational setting is one built around a community of people from diverse cultural origins. The University’s mission—offering students education in a collaborative learning environment that prepares them for a life of scholarship, work, and service—is guided by its resolve to enhance the industrial, economic, and cultural opportunities for its four-county service area, which includes major resort destinations in the Hilton Head Island/Beaufort area.

To address changing demographic characteristics resulting from a Spanish-speaking population boom, the faculty decided to adopt innovations during this critical developmental period to insure that the proposed international activities become permanently imbedded and integrated into the mission of the University. Therefore, in April 2002, the faculty organization unanimously voted to internationalize the curriculum, and this was reaffirmed in 2005. The University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) has a vested interest in encouraging native Spanish-speaking students from our area (most of whom are from Mexico) to further their education.

In addition to adding international content into existing curriculum, a primary means by which academic programs can enhance the international competency of their courses is to include new students with various countries of origin. To this end, USCB has a vested interest in encouraging native Spanish-speaking students from our area (most of whom are from Mexico) to further their education.
in the US has been acknowledged by many in the business world as well as in academia. Conferences organized by Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) around the country have provided a forum for such discussions on a nationwide scale. The existence of these conferences illustrates the significant need for internationally skilled managers in the United States.

The need for cross-cultural managerial skills is evidenced by demographic trends. The US Census Bureau reports that the Hispanic population increased by 57.9% (from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000) compared to an increase of only 13.2% for the total US population (see Figure 1). According to national estimates, the nation’s Hispanic population reached 41.3 million in 2004. This population accounted for about one-half of the national population growth (2.9 million) from July 2003 to July 2004. This Hispanic growth rate (3.6% over the 12-month period) was more than three times higher than that of the total population (1.0%). It appears that these significant demographic changes will impact labor and economic productivity. Furthermore, the growth in numbers of these “newly arriving” Hispanics highlights the urgency of addressing the educational needs of this Spanish-speaking population. Hence, the chief aim of this study is to support the internationalization of management education.

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**Figure 1. Percent Change by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1990–2000. Source: US Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 census figures**
The Need to Focus on Managing a Hispanic Workforce in South Carolina and the Coastal Region

While the US witnessed a 58% increase in the Hispanic population, the Hispanic population of South Carolina grew from 30,500 in 1990 to 95,076 in 2000—a 211% increase. All 46 South Carolina counties declared a population increase for Hispanics. At the same time, census data show that foreign-born residents in South Carolina increased 132.1%. Between 2000 and 2003, South Carolina had the fourth fastest growing Hispanic population in the US (Vander Mey).

USCB serves the four coastal counties of Hampton, Jasper, Colleton, and Beaufort. According to census data, the Hispanic population for Hampton County increased from 71 to 547 (670%), Colleton increased from 176 to 551 (213%), Jasper increased from 69 to 1,190 (1,625%), and Beaufort increased from 2,168 to 8,208 (279%). In the 2000 census for South Carolina, Beaufort County had the largest recorded percentage of Hispanic population. Figure 2 indicates the percent changes in the Hispanic population for the Lowcountry region.

**Figure 2. Lowcountry Hispanic population percent change between 1990 and 2000.**

Source: US Census Bureau figures
As a result of these demographic changes, the community will incur management challenges as the Hispanic population moves into the region’s workforce. Therefore, the need to focus on managing the evolving workforce and the corresponding educational needs becomes central to the economic vitality of the community and the success of our University in fulfilling its mission.

The main draw to these areas of South Carolina is tourism. Coastal South Carolina, especially Hilton Head Island and Beaufort, does not have a major industrial base or significant port activity for the export of goods abroad. However, international visitors spend significant tourism dollars on food, lodging, merchandise, and recreation. In fact, tourism is the largest employer in the state and has grown from $8.3 billion (2002) to over $10 billion (2007) annually (Flowers and Hill; Prosser). Not surprisingly, the Hispanic population is an ever-increasingly large percentage of the hospitality workforce.

Developing Programming for the Hispanic Population
Curriculum development and revision begins with a concept that is fundamental to any guest-service operation—the customer defines product attributes (Ashley et al.). The customers of the curriculum are industry, students, and faculty. Relevancy of the curriculum to industry needs and content area is one of the top strategic concerns in hospitality education (Dopson and Nelson; Nelson and Dopson). A recent study that surveyed hospitality industry representatives examined the entire curriculum from an industry perspective (Gussoy and Swanger), while another looked at competencies needed in the specific area of Club Management (Perdue, Woods, and Ninemier). The current study asks respondents to determine their education needs. Follow-up studies will look at the employers’ continuing education needs.

PURPOSE
The two primary goals of this research are (1) to develop a constituent-centered curriculum to enhance the quality of life for regional employees who have crossed the border to work and whose native language is Spanish and (2) to encourage and facilitate an increase in Spanish-speaking students to become degree-seeking students in Business or Hospitality.

METHODOLOGY
This pilot study sets forth a methodology for examining the educational needs of the respondents. A survey instrument was developed to identify what areas of business or the business portion of the hospitality curriculum are of greatest interest to these new students. The instrument developed was...
The survey, given in Spanish, had 34 subjects. The survey asked the respondents to rate the level of importance of each question in the construct on a seven-point Likert scale, where 7 indicates very interested. Because the sample size was small, and because the goal of the research study was to identify the areas of interest for potential students and NOT to develop a scale measure, we examined the correlations between items in each of our dimensions rather than conduct a confirmatory factor analysis.

The survey was confidential, national issues seem to have had a negative effect on the willingness of individuals to reveal information that may raise questions about their citizenship. Because of the difficulties in obtaining a large and representative sample, more efforts are needed to reach out to this population. An effort to obtain additional data is scheduled for the summer of 2010.

RESULTS

The survey, given in Spanish, had 34 subjects. The median age of participants was 30 years old, and the vast majority of them, 80%, had worked in the United States for at least three years. Subjects reported their country of origin (of the 22 subjects who responded to this question) as Mexico (48%), Costa Rica (18%), Argentina, Columbia or Honduras (9%), Uruguay (5%) and other (20%). The average for weekly hours worked was between 41 and 50. Seventy-five percent of the respondents reported they spoke English either “slightly well” and “somewhat well.” Only 18% reported they spoke English “very well” and “very well.”

Sample Statistics. The survey asked the respondent to rate the level of importance of each question in the construct on a seven-point Likert scale.
Finally, since the majority of the respondents (75%) spoke English either "slightly well" or "somewhat well," the items concerning negotiating wages, the difference between Management and Marketing (shown in Table 2).

The questions relating to the Management construct are listed below. These questions were imbedded in the 48-question survey and related to skills necessary to get a job, negotiate wages, work efficiently, manage people, and get along with others. It is not surprising that newly arrived workers whose native language is other than English would express interest in these topics. New arrivals know that norms and workplace rules differ between Latin America and the United States. The new local cultural and language differences, along with the necessity of finding work in a new country, could have contributed to the increased interest in the questions related to our Management Construct.

The differences between the mean values for each of the five dimensions are NOT statistically significant at alpha <= .05 except for the difference between Management and Marketing (shown in Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>N*</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.5483</td>
<td>1.10085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance / Accounting / Bookkeeping</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5.4368</td>
<td>1.18469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Bus. / Entrepreneurship / Strategy</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.2912</td>
<td>1.40213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.2500</td>
<td>1.18303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.2000</td>
<td>1.22867</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sample N=34

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>N*</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.2000</td>
<td>1.22867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.5483</td>
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<td>Finance / Accounting / Bookkeeping</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>Economics</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.2500</td>
<td>1.18303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Management
deviation                          |    |       |                |
| TABLE 1                                        |    |       |                |

The questions relating to the Management construct are listed below.
Together, working together: How can I do to create a group that works well more?
9. Getting a raise: How do I convince my boss that he/she should pay me more?
8. Interviewing: Can I get your best foot forward in an interview?
7. Working efficiently: How do I design work so that we can get the most done in the shortest time?
6. Leading other people: How do I convince my employees to work harder and longer?
5. Managing time: What are the best ways to manage my time at work?
4. Job searching: How do I make a good resume?
3. Job searching: How do I find job openings and how do I apply for work?
2. Evaluating others: How do I evaluate the performance of others at work?
1. Negotiating: How do I get the best deal from a buyer or seller of a product?

Questions Relating to the Management Construct:
1. Negotiations: How do I get the best deal from a buyer or seller of a product?
2. Evaluating others: How do I evaluate the performance of others at work?
3. Job searching: How do I find job openings and how do I apply for them?
4. Job searching: How do I make a good resume?
5. Managing time: What are the best ways to manage my time at work and at home?
6. Leading other people: How do I convince my employees to work harder and longer?
7. Working efficiently: How do I design work so that we can get the most done in the shortest time?
8. Interviewing: Learn how to put your best foot forward in an employment interview.
9. Getting a raise: How do I convince my boss that he/she should pay me more?
10. Working together: What can I do to create a group that works well together?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One-Sample Test</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test Value = 0</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>Mean Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>27.141</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>5.54828</td>
<td>5.1295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>23.181</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>5.20000</td>
<td>4.7412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* the mean difference between Management (5.54) and Marketing (5.20) is significant at \( \alpha = .01 \).

job searches, and effective interviewing may have been popular items because they are very language-dependent skills. Hence, an explanation for the high degree of interest in this category may be that they reflect a need for English-language training.

**Questions Relating to the Management Construct:**

1. Negotiations: How do I get the best deal from a buyer or seller of a product?
2. Evaluating others: How do I evaluate the performance of others at work?
3. Job searching: How do I find job openings and how do I apply for them?
4. Job searching: How do I make a good resume?
5. Managing time: What are the best ways to manage my time at work and home?
6. Leading other people: How do I convince my employees to work harder and longer?
7. Working efficiently: How do I design work so that we can get the most done in the shortest time?
8. Interviewing: Learn how to put your best foot forward in an employment interview.
9. Getting a raise: How do I convince my boss that he/she should pay me more?
10. Working together: What can I do to create a group that works well together?
The questions relating to the Marketing Construct were rated lowest by respondents. These questions related to selling, marketing, product development, and serving customers. The lack of interest in the Marketing Construct may have been related to “time in country” and the relatively low worker status of most of the population, because many of the ranking questions relate to the needs of higher level managers or business owners. Our respondents were hourly workers, most of whom were in the country for three years or less. Perhaps these items relate more to what Maslow described as “higher order” needs of these new workers (i.e., esteem—to engage oneself to gain recognition and have an activity or activities that give the person a sense of contribution, to feel accepted and self-valued). If this is the case, one would expect the needs of this group to change as they spend more time in the country. Hence, future studies ought to extend the sample frame to include workers who have been in country for a longer period of time. This would allow for an examination of the change or “cycle of learning” that may take place as these workers become acculturated.

The authors also investigated gender effects in the rankings of the five business constructs. Table 3 shows the mean values for Male (0) vs. Female (1) for each of the five scales. Men and women did not report statistically significant differences in interest in these categories of learning outcomes. These results should be interpreted with caution as they are based on a sample size that is too small for the use of a parametric measure such as the t-test.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS
The results of this pilot study showed that the respondents in our study wanted to receive training in the area of management. All five of the business constructs we measured obtained a “slightly interested’ response (a score of 5 on a 7-point scale) by the respondents. The only statistically significant difference in respondent preferences among our business constructs. Therefore, much of our discussion has focused on the most popular (Management) and least popular (Marketing) constructs. However, the mean values for all of the dimensions were greater than 5 on the most popular (Management) and least popular (Marketing) constructs, hence a larger sample size and further examination of the results may be worthy of further investigation.

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CULTURALLY SENSITIVE CURRICULUM

TABLE 3

MEANS BY GENDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FinAccBookeep</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5.5433</td>
<td>.96995</td>
<td>.24249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.6044</td>
<td>1.37707</td>
<td>.52048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.2891</td>
<td>.93063</td>
<td>.23266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.5000</td>
<td>1.16369</td>
<td>.43983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.5187</td>
<td>1.01733</td>
<td>.25433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9714</td>
<td>1.17858</td>
<td>.44546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.2321</td>
<td>.92857</td>
<td>.23214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.6531</td>
<td>1.54712</td>
<td>.58476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBusEntStrat</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.5403</td>
<td>1.13780</td>
<td>.28445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.5873</td>
<td>1.49032</td>
<td>.56329</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The greatest challenge in this study was overcoming the reluctance of our survey pool to respond to the survey questions. Their hesitancy to answer questions was likely caused by a fear that their answers would reveal the status of their citizenship. The effects of this fear were underestimated in our solicitation process. Based on our experiences, we recommend that researchers solicit the participation of similar referents (in terms of ethnicity and language fluency) for data collection.

The results of this study will be beneficial for the development of continuing education programs at the University of South Carolina Beaufort. In addition, the general scale construction may be of benefit to other scholars and hospitality management/business program directors as they strive to meet the needs of this underserved population. As these new entrants gain greater English competency and continue to socialize and acculturate into the US economy, their training and educational needs will likely change. More study is needed to identify a likely pathway by which these potential students might become candidates for a degree program at the university level. This would not only further the mission of our regional educational system, but would also enhance the local and regional economy, provide greater opportunities for more members of our community, and arguably lead to a decrease in some of the negative social consequences associated with poverty. Moreover, education has the greatest prospect of positively affecting members of our society who feel disenfranchised from mainstream opportunities afforded to many others. For these reasons, this study has made an important contribution toward what we know about the needs of these new entrants to our communities.
The results of this study are preliminary and should be interpreted with some caution. However, they give some additional insights into the needs of this underserved and fast-growing population of service workers in America.

APPENDIX 1
BUSINESS CONCEPTS VALUE MEASURE (BCVM)

This survey is being administered in order to identify the educational needs of the Hispanic/Latino community. Your answers to these questions are completely confidential and will be used to develop educational materials that are most suited for people who share your unique ethnic and demographic background. Please take the time to answer each of the questions as honestly as you can. Your contribution to this research study is very important! Thank you for your willingness to participate.

(1) Your age:_____
(2) Your Gender: M / F
(3) Is English your second language? Yes / No
(4) Your average hourly wage:
   (a) less than $5/hour (b) $5–$6/hour (c) $7–$9/hour (d) $10–$12/hour
   (e) more than $12/hour
(5) How many hours do you generally work each week?
   (a) less than 10 (b) 10–15 (c) 16–30 (d) 31–40 (e) 41–50 (f) 51–60
   (g) more than 60
(6) How long have you lived in the United States?
   (a) Only seasonally (b) Less than 1 year (c) 1–2 years (d) 3–5 years
   (e) more than 5 years
(7) How well do you speak English?
   (a) very well (b) somewhat well (c) slightly (d) somewhat poorly
   (e) very poorly
(8) What is your country of origin? ____________________
CULTURALLY SENSITIVE CURRICULUM

If you had the opportunity to attend a conference or class where the following concepts were being taught, which of these would you be most interested in learning? For each of the topics below, indicate how interested you would be in learning a topic by assigning a value from the following scale from one to seven.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Disinterested</th>
<th>Slightly Disinterested</th>
<th>Somewhat Interested</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Slightly Interested</th>
<th>Somewhat Interested</th>
<th>Very Interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Customer Service: How do I make sure that my clients are satisfied with my products or services?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Entrepreneurs: What does it take to create and run your own business?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>How to buy a home: What do I need to know about getting a home loan?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Franchises: How to purchase and run a franchise business.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Income statement: What is it and how do I read one?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Money, money, money: Identify financial sources available to start-up companies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Balance Sheets: What are business assets and liabilities and why do I need a balance sheet to keep track of them?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Selling: How do I know how much to charge for something I sell?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Negotiations: How do I get the best deal from a buyer or seller of a product?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Shopping for deals: How do I find the best prices on something I want to buy?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Understanding interest rates on the money I borrow and the money I save.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Minority-owned businesses: What does it take to qualify for this special government status?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Taking risks: When should you take risks in your business?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>QuickBooks: How to use computer software to keep business and personal financial records.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Evaluating others: How do I evaluate the performance of others at work?</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Unemployment: Everything you need to know about qualifying for unemployment benefits.</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Setting prices: How do companies know what to charge for goods and services?</td>
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18. Job searching: How do I find job openings and how do I apply for them?c
19. Retirement: How much do I need to save each month to have enough money to retire?a
20. Buying a business: How to assess the value of a business.e
21. Borrowing money: What I need to know in order to apply for a loan.a
22. Women with infant children (WIC) and food stamps: How to qualify for these programs?b
23. Job searching: How do I make a good resume?c
24. Developing a product: How do I develop a product that people will want to buy?d
25. Budget: How can a family budget help me control my spending?a
26. Managing time: What are the best ways to manage my time at work and at home?c
27. Small Business Development Centers: Getting help for your small business.e
28. Checking accounts: Adding deposits, subtracting withdrawals, and reconciling a bank statement.a
29. Starting a small business: Everything I really need to know.e
30. Industries: How do I learn about a particular industry I'm interested in?b
31. Leading other people: How do I convince my employees to work harder and longer?c
32. How do I find and purchase good medical insurance for me (my family) and how much should it cost?a
33. Can it be done? Describe how to test the feasibility of a new business concept.e
34. Needing help? Learn about government programs to assist new businesses.b
35. Converting currency: What I need to know about exchange rates.b
36. Taxes: How do I file taxes?a
37. Working efficiently: How do I design work so that we can get the most done in the shortest time?c
38. Interviewing: Learn how to put your best food forward in an employment interview.c
39. Marketing tricks: How do I advertise and sell a product or services to others?d
40. Taxes: Why do we pay them and where does the money go?b
CULTURALLY SENSITIVE CURRICULUM

41. What is a credit score, why is it important to me, and how can I improve my score? 

42. Getting a raise: How do I convince my boss that he/she should pay me more? 

43. On-line sales: How do I use e-Bay and the Internet to sell stuff? 

44. E-business: How to start an Internet-based business? 

45. Savings and investment plans: What do I do with my extra money? 

46. Learning your customers: Ways to identify who you should be trying to sell your product or services to. 

47. Working together: What can I do to create a group that works well together? 

48. Stocks: how do I understand the stock market and what are some investment strategies that work? 

WORKS CITED


