

“Keep Shining, Keep Smiling...”

LIS Collegiality through a Relational-Cultural Theory Lens



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Relational-Cultural Theory and its LIS context

- Dr. Jean Baker Miller, M.D. (Wellesley College, Stone Center - 1970s)
- Feminist theoretical framework underscores empathy, validation, cultivation of relationship & mutual trust; adaptable for critical librarianship practice (Arellano Douglas, Chiu, Gadsby, Kumbier, Nataraj, 2018)
- Push back against valorization of separation & autonomy (individualist) in favor of relational empowerment (collective)
 - Creating “power with” connections with colleagues rather than imposing “power over” them
 - Shame & humiliation → leads to disconnection & isolation, negatively impacting ability to be collegial and engage in relationships that help us grow



Collegiality in LIS: Relating personal experience

Then

- Cultural insensitivity
- Passive-aggressive communication & gaslighting
- Limited professional development / mentorship
- Inability to be authentic self; public service persona exacts a price

Now

- Intentionality behind actions - cultural sensitivity built into strategic plan
- Open-communication; meeting norms explicitly stated
- Informal mentorships; external/internal professional development
- Authenticity embedded in the work we do w/students & faculty (to an extent)



Librarians as Validating Agents

- Validation is an “enabling, confirming and supportive process initiated by in- and out-of-class agents” to support a student’s academic and personal development.
- When a student is validated, they feel capable of learning, have higher self-worth, feel that they bring something unique and valuable to the college experience, and they are recognized and accepted as such.



Validation Theory and Colleague Relationships

- How do we validate each other, as people of color in higher education?
- How can we foster relationships to support each other in our professional and personal development?
- For those of us trying to achieve things like tenure, a permanent position, or full professor status, who do not conform to expectations and standards that are associated with the dominant culture —how can we motivate and support each other?



RCT & MTL

What is
MTL?

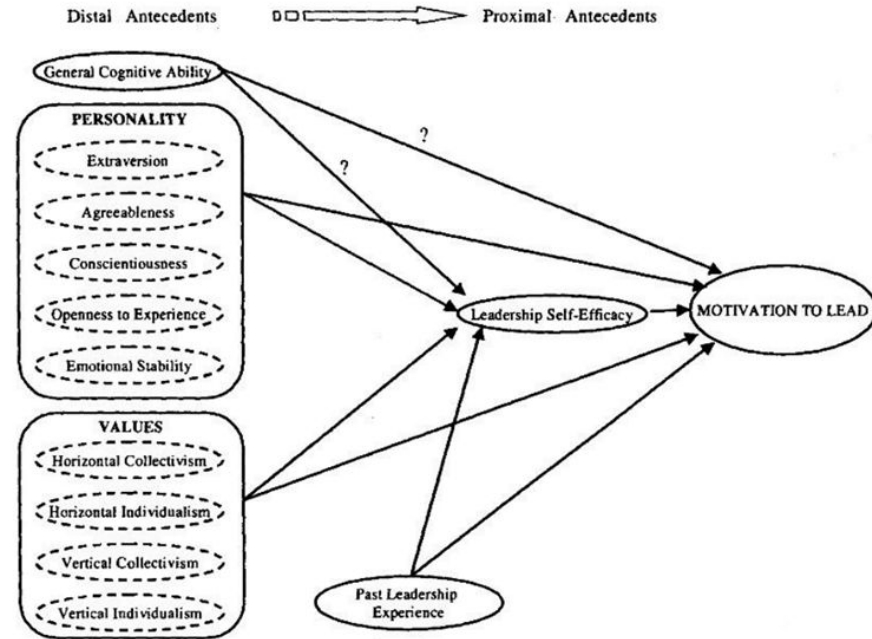
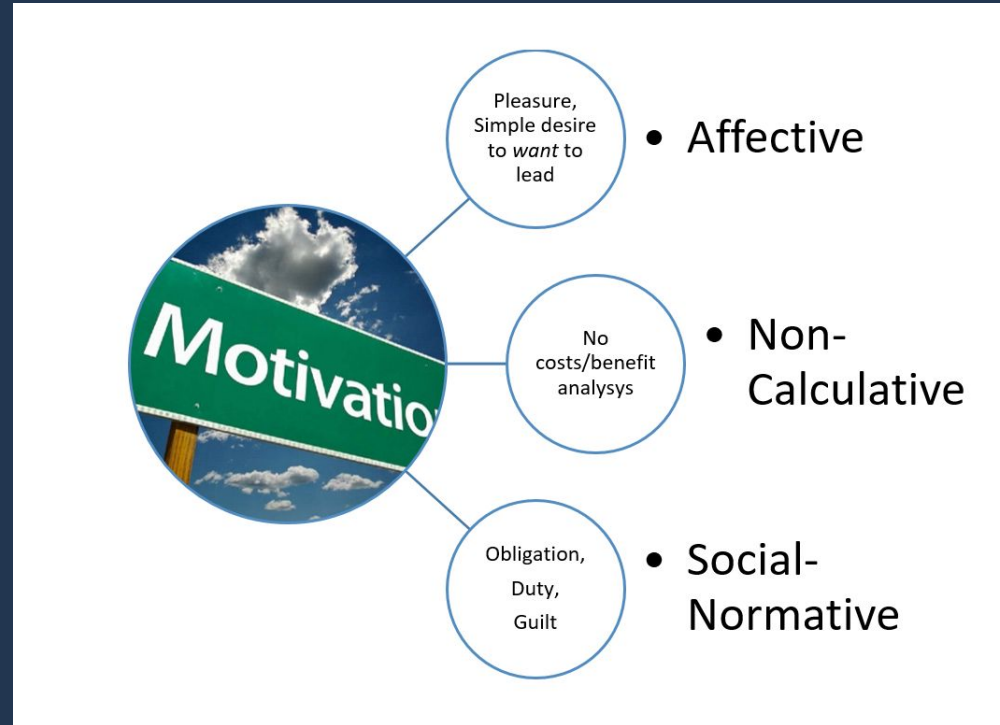


Figure 1.1: Variables Contributing to MTL (Chan & Drasgow, 2001)



RCT & MTL





URM Librarians' MTL in Academia

- Highly Social Normative Identities
 - Within institutions (students/staff of color)
 - Surrounding communities (paying it back)
 - Mentoring (paying it forward)
- How do we move from Social Normative to Affective/Non-Calculating?



Bibliography

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