



Steven R. Van Hook, PhD - Kip Roffo (Second Life)

I became interested in cross-cultural management and communication when I was working in Russia as a TV bureau chief. The differences between Russian and American cultures helped contrast the stark diversity between us. This led to my graduate research.

Here are some key theorists in cultural research. But rather than how different we are, the more interesting question to me is: how do we get beyond those differences?

Effective cross-cultural relations are especially important to international educators and students; global business managers; mass and social media publishers; resident of culturally diverse nations, states, and cities.

Vic Michalak: Lots of work behind the scenes - thank you, Chantal and Jes!

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): ☺ Our pleasure

Tulpa (jes.cobalt): Paolo ☺

Paolo Rousselot waves

Vic Michalak: Dutch have always been explorers...

Even in U.S. history, the "[Mayflower](#)" ship (1620) started from Holland... then picked up passengers in England.

Kip Roffo:

The book [Global Work: Bridging Distance, Culture & Time](#) says 21st century leaders in the worldwide marketplace need to develop cross-cultural skills and supporting technologies to manage and communicate effectively with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Teachers are often befuddled on how to teach a room full of international and culturally diverse students, clustered according to their nationality, and not interacting as a unified group of classmates.

Vic Michalak: What you just said should be written in 100 meter high letters somewhere!

TR Amat: I've noticed a lot of people seem to neglect history, and, effects can impact cultures for generations. [about ..."need to develop cross-cultural skills, etc."]



Kip Roffo:

The question is: how do we gather a group of culturally diverse people in an international setting, and try to get beyond our differences, reaching together towards a common purpose? It is a challenge to conduct a study of this type requiring a suitable group of culturally diverse participants, comfortable with the research process, exposed to a wide range of themes and images, with consistent and replicable observations.

Vic Michalak: Not everyone wants trans-cultural cooperation --- they are afraid that their own culture may be diluted or even disappear or be corrupted!

I am not one of those people --- I am at home wherever I go (First Life or Second Life), but not everyone welcomes Google or being able to talk with anyone anywhere...

Tulpa (jes.cobalt): :(

TR Amat: I guess there'd be issues of researcher cultural bias, unless the researcher was incredibly careful.

Catpower (catpower.daxter): it can also be because other cultures sometimes judge other cultures



Kip Roffo:

A course in global advertising for a UC international program provided study participants and content. Hundreds of different students from diverse countries and cultures were exposed to thousands of total impressions of commercials with varied themes.

Commercials provided an effective medium since they are brief packets of information, demographically resonant, with a wide variety of themes and images, in a medium universally familiar to the study participants.

Defining terms: 'cross-cultural' relations are *between* cultures; 'transculturalism' goes above and beyond cultural differences. 'Resonance' is a sympathetic vibration; 'dissonance' creates disagreement and discord.

Vic Michalak: Commercials are cultural messages!

TR Amat: Some people are particularly concerned about how careful large companies are about the personal, and metadata, data they collect, and impact on current and future privacy.

Kip Roffo:

The study sought to identify transcultural positive resonance through clips that received high mean score and low variance from the international participants. A larger variance in responses would indicate a dissonant reaction.



Vic Michalak: "I'm pickin' up good vibrations" (Beach Boys 1960s)

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): 😊

Vic Michalak: 😊

Tulpa (jes.cobalt): :))) heheh

Dawn Rhiannyr: :)

Kip Roffo:

Articles on this research have been published in scholarly journals including UNESCO's Prospects, and Sage's Journal of Research in International Education. These and other related articles are published at <http://wwmr.us>

Vic Michalak: See <http://walden.wwmr.org/bio.htm> about our speaker

Dawn Rhiannyr: thank you Vic :)

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): Vic is fast! 😊

Kip Roffo:

The study included a wide range of countries and cultural diversity, and an even split between participating males and females.

Diverse cultures of Asia, Europe, the Americas were well represented in the study.

Wide cultural diversity was strongly represented by participants Italy, Japan, Germany, Brazil, South Korea, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey.

Topics that might create dissonance in a multicultural room include humor, sex, religion, and politics (or nationalism).

Humor and jokes are often deeply rooted in a cultural context, so the message may well be lost on others from a different country – even if they understand all the words used.

There are considerable cultural differences in the expressions of sexuality.

Kip Roffo:

Wars are sometimes waged over differences in religious beliefs.

Messages with a nationalist angle can create a high level of dissonance in a room, especially if nations and cultures are pitted against one another.

Vic Michalak: Italy, Japan, Germany, even Brazil, are well represented in SL as well...

"A male conservative religious zealot and a female liberal atheist walked into a bar..." Did I catch all of the 'taboo' topics? ☺

Dawn Rhiannyr: lol Vic



Kip Roffo:

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Video: Summary and examples of culturally resonant clips (6:25) <http://youtu.be/6yKNwBbm-Uk>

Video: Longer overview of transcultural study (16:55) <http://howtoteach.us/vanhook5.htm>

Vic Michalak: Baby animals combines a couple of those... everyone likes them....

TR Amat: Common human experiences?

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): yes

Kip Roffo:

Babies and children were the top ranked transculturally resonant theme in the study. If you are ever at a United Nations meeting where the old diplomats are battling, bring out the baby pictures of grandchildren and see if it changes the mood.

Vic Michalak: Mongolia? Chile? Bolivia?

Catpower (catpower.daxter): Mongolia I guess

Kip Roffo:

Next to babies, the participants ranked the animal clips highly. International students often miss their pets back home more than their families. Some may be indifferent to animals, but that is more of a personal than cultural reaction.

Vic Michalak: Ah... there are the baby animals...

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): George 😊

Vic Michalak: Not everyone in the world understands pets...

TR Amat: Easier to get on with pets than siblings? :)

Tulpa (jes.cobalt): Hi George 😊

Dawn Rhiannyr waves to George

Vic Michalak: Hey George!! Good to see you!

Curious George: Hello, everyone

Kip Roffo:



International students found the relationship clips engaging, but were often more interested in the examples that showed conflicts in the relations rather than sweetness.

The high ranking of sports clips was surprising. I was expecting a dissonant nationalist reaction to sports, but instead found the students typically appreciated excellence and team spirit ... beyond national, cultural and demographic boundaries.



Catpower (catpower.daxter): haha yes

TR Amat: Shoes with a self-destruct date? :)

Catpower (catpower.daxter): men should just stop complaining about it :)

Vic Michalak: I own three pairs... one for work and one for when I am not at work and one for real work outside...

Tulpa (jes.cobalt) thinks she has.... maybe 7, at the most

Curious George: I can imagine someone asking [Marcos](#) how many shoes does [Imelda](#) has

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): hehehhe George

TR Amat: Shoes for work, weddings, funerals, and leisure are the male viewpoint?

Vic Michalak: Imelda Marcos left behind 15 mink coats, 508 gowns, 1000 handbags, and 1060 pairs of shoes when she left their palace for Hawaii... she had about 7500 pairs

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): :(Vic

Tulpa (jes.cobalt) passes out!

Curious George: No, just 5 or 6 pairs

Kip Roffo:

Self-image was a tricky theme to categorize ... but there was a transcultural interest in how other peoples see themselves, and a curiosity to see another culture as outsiders looking in.

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): :)))

Vic Michalak: Sports is certainly universal...unless it gets too competitive and people start beating each other up...

Vic Michalak: How about the weather?? If you do not know what to say, you usually talk about the weather...

Tulpa (jes.cobalt): Ha ha ha ha ha!

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): Yes :)))

Kip Roffo:

Life cycles: We're born, we live, we die ... for now, something everyone shares in common. The selected water clips didn't pass the cutoff for transcultural resonance, mostly due to confounding variables within a clip. But during qualitative interviews, the water images clearly appealed to the students beyond cultural differences.

TR Amat: Life (health) extension technologies may really mess-up 'lifecycle' stuff... In the UK you can talk about weather indefinitely. :)

Dawn Rhiannyr: all of Europe TR ;)

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): Sounds like [Feng Shui](#) ☺

TR Amat: So, water themes which are person-free and with water sounds as background, not music?

Kip Roffo:

Discussions of food and eating habits seem to transcend cultural differences.

Vic Michalak: Food!

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): Food works :)))

TR Amat: Best to avoid [Soylent Green](#) on the food front? :)

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): Sure :)))

Vic Michalak: Hmm.... may sneak out for some coffee and a snack (coming up on lunch) and turn up the sound... but may miss some videos! ☺ gah..

Kip Roffo:

There also appears to be a transcultural interest in musical rhythms between cultures.

Vic Michalak: Very nice slides and photos, Kip...

TR Amat: Yes, this an impressive display of imagery.

Vic Michalak: I am always amazed at how music is transcultural....

Tulpa (jes.cobalt): Love [Taiko Drums](#) ☺

TR Amat: 'Beat' does seem to transcend culture, according to some...

Dawn Rhiannyr: yes music really connects and moves the mind positively

Kip Roffo:

There seems to be a transcultural interest in possible life forms on other worlds, based on my college presentation series on the topic.

Vic Michalak: I know that American folk music and rap has been assimilated and modified culturally worldwide...

TR Amat: You might have problems with alien machine civilizations. :)

Vic Michalak: Aha! I imagine that the 'first contact' from aliens would be them playing back a song they like from us!!

Nat Ure (nat.spirt): Aliens might not be able to hear at all

Tulpa (jes.cobalt): Heheheh

Kip Roffo:

Transcultural tactics in global classrooms can contribute to international student comfort, bonding, integration, content relevancy, and holding their attention.

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): ☺

TR Amat: Robots and AIs produce interestingly varied reactions even within cultures...

Vic Michalak: Second Life is a pretty strange (but wonderful) country...

Kip Roffo:

Here are some examples of transcultural tactics applied to a university course in Global Economics:

The socioeconomic costs of war can be effectively transculturally illustrated by showing the suffering of children.

Transculturally appealing animals can be used to explain how changes in farming practices transformed economic development.

The self-image transcultural tool can illustrate differing moral perspectives with a case study on the Masai aesthetic, where they describe someone's physical appearance in terms of their 'goodness'

A movie video clip from '[A Beautiful Mind](#)' demonstrates the principle of group and individual interests in social gain, by using an illustration of men and women interacting at a nightclub.

Catpower (catpower.daxter): :(

Vic Michalak: [Born in Santa Barbara... but I don't remember... pretty young at the time...]

TR Amat: The effects of 'globalisation' are likely to be controversial...

Vic Michalak: That must be one of the "contented cows" (speaking of commercials earlier...)

TR Amat: I've seen Japanese pop videos of happy pop stars dancing in the concrete pens of cows in Japan...

Paolo Rousselot: very profound statements!

Vic Michalak: I like that idea! Avatars in SL are often defined by their interactions with others (instead of First Life looks or whatever)....

TR Amat: Effective nightclub protocols might be very popular topics. :)



Kip Roffo:

The dynamics of social networking and complexity theory can be demonstrated by the principle of racecar drafting.

Discussion board topics for international online courses can feature transculturally resonant life-cycle themes such as employment, education, health care, family planning.

On-ground and face-to-face learning may long remain the ideal learning environment, especially as it brings together and shares cultural diversity.

However new virtual technologies will bring ever larger and more diverse groups of the world's people together.

Vic Michalak:

<https://www.physicsforums.com/threads/the-physics-behind-slipstreaming-drafting.508369/>
http://www.nascar.com/en_us/news-media/articles/2011/04/20/inside-nascar-science-draft.htm
!

Curious George: Sadly, I have to scoot, RL calls. Have fun, everyone!

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): Waves ☺

Kip Roffo:

The Educare Learning Centers in Second Life provide transculturally resonant learning resources. Educare Research inc (ERi) provides free learning resources supporting international educators and students: <http://educares.net/>

You can get a PDF file of this presentation at <http://wwmr.us/support/transculture.pdf>

Vic Michalak: Many opportunities to go to S. Korea over the summer if you want to share English (or other languages) - they will pay your way, etc...

Tulpa (jes.cobalt): :)))

Kip Roffo:

My dissertation on themes and images that transcend cultural differences is posted at <http://wwmr.us>

Feel free to email me with comments and questions: steven@wwmr.us

Dawn Rhiannyr: perfect

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): Thank you ☺

Paolo Rousselot: very enlightening! thank you!

Vic Michalak: Steven/Kip --- you are a consummate SL presenter!!!

Dawn Rhiannyr: wonderful thankyou!!!

Vic Michalak: Thank you!

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): I have two questions for you Kip...



1. TR Amat: *Would an argument be that advertising is only targeted at those with disposable income, and access to advertising media, so, those who fall outside that might be 'different'?*

Kip Roffo: Television has become one of the most democratic of media on the planet. In the industrialized world, 98% of all households have at least one TV set. Globally, the number drops some, but still 89% of all households worldwide have a television. While many commercials – especially for higher-end products – target those with large disposable incomes (vacations, cars, jewelry), a good percentage of the ads sell items most families buy: personal hygiene, food stuff, toys for children.

Though we used commercials as the medium in this study, the focus was not on the specific product or the advertising message, but the themes and images contained within the commercials. Most of the internationally diverse commercials were devoid of words at all, and pre-study and follow-up steps sought to discern how much of a reaction may have been influenced by the commercial's message rather than the imagery. While any medium (including television commercials) may have an influence on the reaction to the perception of its imbedded themes and images, we sought to minimize that as much as possible.



2. *Curious George*: *To what extent is the immersive VR experience transcultural?*

Kip Roffo: The nice thing about virtual worlds is how they dispense with standard demographic measures altogether. What we project into the environment is not our determined age, race, gender – but the avatar creation of our choosing. Here is truly a case where we are not inherently judged by our real-world socio economic standings, but by the content of the character we ourselves create. We are free to experiment beyond the cultural boundaries we have embraced, or that have been imposed upon us – to the extent our own life patterns allow. And, of course, the transcultural themes and images identified in this study could apply in this medium of virtual immersive experience as much as any other media.

Nat Ure (nat.spirt): does clapping translate across cultures?

Dawn Rhiannyr: true that

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): 😊

Paolo Rousselot chuckles...

Vic Michalak: stomping feet for some people <http://www.wikihow.com/Clap-Your-Hands> - guide to how to clap for a culture that does not clap much

TR Amat: I've heard suggestions that rubbing noses is about smelling each other -comments?

Vic Michalak: Spectacular presentation - thank you! Always learn something here...

Tulpa (jes.cobalt): Thank you Kip :))) this presentation really added to the work Chantal and I do

TR Amat: Thanks for impressive presentation.

Vic Michalak: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwZ3wh49RH8> -- five styles of clapping worldwide

Paolo Rousselot: research delivered last week - apparently conservatives & liberals smell distinctly different & one *really* doesn't like the other!

Catpower (catpower.daxter): thank you Kip.!

Dawn Rhiannyr: yes was a really wonderful and informative lesson

mImarshall7: very informative, thanks

Chantal (nymf.hathaway): Thank you Kip ☺

Tulpa (jes.cobalt): ☺

Kip Roffo:

The world is in our hands! Thank you.

Steven Van Hook's [Entire Presentation](#)



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