



United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Open Pedagogy Fellowship

Improving Intercultural Communication Through Mapping Culture

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Introduction:

Welcome to your role in an international mission. This mission is dedicated to expanding educational access and championing student empowerment through "open pedagogy." In this approach, you, as a student, are at the heart of an engaging, collaborative learning environment, with the freedom to access your educational journey. What is this mission's ultimate goal? To heighten social justice in our community, promoting the free exchange of knowledge and work. Under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework, this renewable assignment paves your path to becoming an agent of change within your community. Prepare to embark on this transformative journey.

For this work, we will integrate the Communication Studies and Public Relations disciplines to respond to SDG #10: Reduced Inequalities. Within this SDG, we will focus on the specific target 10.2: "By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status."

Purpose:

This assignment is designed to improve your intercultural communication skills and increase connections among class members as well as with local and global communities.

Learning Objectives:

Ways in which effective intercultural communication can help reduce inequalities.

Instructions:

Students are asked to create various types of maps.

This active learning practice is a collaboration among students designed to create awareness of cultural resources in the community while sharing their own cultural experiences through the production of various types of maps. This multi-part interdisciplinary assignment has local and global components.

This assignment may be adapted for courses in other disciplines or other communication studies courses such as COMM 204 Interpersonal Communication, COMM 220 Small Group Communication, COMM 225 Intercultural Communication, and PRLN 2441 Organizational Communications. It may also be used as a collaborative assignment between two or more disciplines such as communication studies and graphic design (e.g., courses such as COMM 220 Small Group and GDES 212 Publication Design with InDesign).

Local Assignment: How Culture Influences Our Communication

These scaffolded local assignments will address the following COMM 108 Foundations of Human Communication course outcome: “Recognize and accommodate gender and cultural differences in communication settings and appreciate diverse communication styles.” The following exercises emphasize the development of intercultural communication skills.

Part 1: Effective Intercultural Communication

The first local assignment focuses on identifying how culture affects communication.

- A. Read the chapter on communication and culture in the course textbook and/or in an OER book such as the following:

Part 1: Culture in Intercultural Business Communication.

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/communications/part/main-body>

Chapter 8: “Communication and Culture” in Communication in the Real World

<https://open.lib.umn.edu/communication/part/chapter-8-culture-and-communication>

- B. Discuss the content in class and/or in the course discussion board forum.

Part 2: Effective Intercultural Communicators

The second local assignment focuses on investigating effective intercultural communicators in history, as well as building our own intercultural communicator identity.

- A. Share an image that comes to mind when you think of an effective intercultural communicator. These images could be conveyed through a written or recorded description.
- B. Identify an effective intercultural communicator. Briefly describe why you chose this person, and provide examples that demonstrate their effective communication skills.
- C. Share an image of yourself (drawn, created digitally, or a photograph) as an effective intercultural communicator. Explain why you chose the image and how it represents effective communication. E.g., Does it portray you overcoming a communication challenge? Engaging in a difficult conversation?

Part 3: Cultural Body Map

The third local assignment focuses on visually investigating one's cultural influences.

- A. Read the following and/or other assigned reading(s) on body mapping:
“Body-Map Storytelling as Research: Methodological: Considerations for Telling the Stories of Undocumented Workers Through Body Mapping”
http://www.migrationhealth.ca/sites/default/files/Body-map_storytelling_as_research_HQ.pdf
- B. Inspired by body mapping techniques and using your media/technique(s) of preference, create an image of your body (e.g., drawing, photograph) and use it to map your cultural influences.
- C. Present your body maps in class, and discuss similarities and differences in terms of cultural influences and how each student represented them visually.

Part 4: Community Culture Map

The fourth local assignment focuses on identifying and building connections among community members with different cultural backgrounds.

- A. In groups of three or more students, brainstorm about a local community. This could be your college or other institution, the area where it's located, or another place or organization that all of the group members have a significant connection to.
- B. Identify and discuss the cultures found in the community and related cultural norms.

- C. What types of communication challenges do members of this community encounter?
- D. Using creative mapping techniques, create a map that illustrates one or more aspect of the community (e.g., strengths, resources, traditions, events) that can help build connections among members in ways that lead to improved intercultural communication.
- E. Present your maps in class, and discuss similarities and differences in terms of cultural representations, challenges, ideas, etc., and how each group represents them visually.

Global Assignment: Mapping Intercultural Communication Initiatives Around the World

The global assignment focuses on identifying intercultural communication initiatives around the world and mapping their connections.

- A. Each student must find an example of a different intercultural communication initiative created in another country, and report to the class: who created it, and when, where, why, and how it was created. They must also share the results of the initiative.
- B. The class must vote on the initiatives that interest them most. For example, a class of 20 students would vote on the top 5 initiatives. The class is divided into 5 groups. The students whose initiatives were selected will each lead a group.
- C. Each small group of students (e.g., a class of 20 students would be divided into 5 groups of 4 students) is assigned one of the top 5 initiatives (that were selected in step B). They then create a map that illustrates the links among the initiatives found by their group members. A variation on this step: students create their own initiative inspired by or related to the top initiative or a combination of initiatives.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

Crawhall, Nigel. "The Role of Participatory Cultural Mapping in Promoting Intercultural Dialogue: We Are Not Hyenas: A Reflection Paper." UNESCO, 2009.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000190753.locale=en>

Format Requirements:

From Part 3: Step B. Inspired by body mapping techniques and using your media/technique(s) of preference, create an image of your body (e.g., drawing, photograph) and use it to map your cultural influences.

From Part 4: Step D. Using creative mapping techniques, create a map that illustrates one or more aspect of the community (e.g., strengths, resources, traditions, events) that can help build connections among members in ways that lead to improved intercultural communication.

From Global Assignment: Step C. Each small group of students (e.g., a class of 20 students would be divided into 5 groups of 4 students) is assigned one of the top 5 initiatives (that were selected in step B). They then create a map that illustrates the links among the initiatives found by their group members.

Assessment Criteria:

We need to continue to develop this. For a class such as COMM 220 Small Group Communication, the assignment would be worth 10% of the overall course grade.

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