THE FIRST STEP IN MY INTERCULTURAL JOURNEY:
AN ONLINE INTRODUCTION TO
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Elisabeth Arévalo-Guerrero, Ph.D.
Modern Languages, Linguistics, and Intercultural Communication
University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC)

The Annual NEALLT Conference 2017 at Muhlenberg College
Agenda

- Online course description:
  - General background information
  - Activities and assignments
  - Samples and student’s evaluation
- Role of the teacher
- Directions
- Q&A
MLL 305 Introduction to Intercultural Communication

- MLL course
- C-credit/elective
- No pre-req.
- Winter & Summer
- 4 intensive weeks
- Alternative to

□ Textbook:

□ Course material: Handouts, PP, videos, activities, DF SGDB, Blog

□ Platform: Blackboard
This course is a critical survey of the foundational concepts of communication and culture as they intertwined in the field of intercultural communication. Both cross-cultural (between different groups) and intracultural (between members of the same group) communication will be examined. It emphasizes a “process” approach to the study of communication between people from different cultures. This course places heavy emphasis on student-centered learning and focuses on self-reflective, and critical thinking as well as discussion between learners as key components for their successful learning development.
Online Course: Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

✓ Explain **foundational concepts** on intercultural communication.
✓ Compare **values across cultures** and identify their influence in everyday communication and behaviors.
✓ Analyze aspects of **verbal and nonverbal** language than intertwine in intercultural encounters
✓ Categorize **conflict resolution styles** across cultures.
✓ Examine the stages on the **cultural adaptation process**.

✓ **Learning outcomes**
  ✓ Increase their **awareness** of their own communication behavior in intercultural settings and encourage them to **reflect** on its consequences in intercultural contacts.
  ✓ Enhance their **appreciation** of the diverse and complex ways of communicating and behaving among different cultures.
  ✓ Assess the **development** of their own **intercultural communication competence**.
Completion of assigned readings, exercises, and activities on time and meeting requirements.

Full and active participation in your Small Group Discussion Boards (SGDB) and Class Forums (CF) by the deadlines.

Critical reflection on the narrative and customization of your intercultural blog.

Respectful and inquisitive attitude while engaging in all class exercises, activities, discussion boards and the Blogs.
MLL 305 Online Course: Assignments

- 4 weekly Modules: 1/2 units-1-3 textbook chapters
- Unit: a video tour of the weekly module, 5-8 steps: reading tasks, reflecting exercises, CF, SGDB, Blog weekly entry

- PP, Tasks, exercises, videos (STEPS): 20% (23=506)
- Class Forum (CFs): 25% (17=567)
- Small Group Discussion Board (SGDB): 25% (6=590)
- Blog: My Intercultural Journey 25% (4=88)
- Final reflection 5% (22)

100% (1751 threads)
**MOD. I - Unit 1.** Why Intercultural communication: culture, identity, ICC

**MOD. II - Unit 2** Value Orientations

**MOD. II - Unit 3:** Ethnic Identities

**MOD. III- Unit 4:** Language and Culture: Verbal & Nonverbal Language

**MOD. III- Unit 5:** Biases and other ailments

**MOD. IV - Unit 6:** Managing Intercultural Conflict

**MOD. IV - Unit 7:** International Transitions

**MOD. IV - EXTRA CREDIT: Unit 8:** Becoming an Ethical Intercultural Communicator
Online course: Assignment 1   Class Forum (CF)   CF 1-2

- Whole group  individual post/ response
- 20 CFs
- Topics: self-culture awareness and reflections, an analysis of an intercultural encounter/ incident, comments on specific developmental tasks, a video reaction, reflection on specific exercises, a final course reflection etc.

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1. WHAT’S IN A NAME? Our given name is probably our first and most important mark of identity. However, it was chosen for us. Naming babies across cultures differs according to customs, traditions, religious beliefs, family values or individual choice. Explain where your name(s) and last name(s) comes from, who gave you your first name and why? Is there any tradition related to the choice? What is the meaning?

2. Let’s get to know each other! Please tell us something about yourself that we probably would not learn in class. Include a picture of yourself. Attach the student profile in your response. Deadline January 2, 2017.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS AND PROFILE ATTACHED (FIRST POSTING OF THE TEACHER).

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Reasons to Study Intercultural Communication:

After reading the section in Chapter 1 titled: Practical Reasons to Study Intercultural Communication, post two thoughtful responses to the question below (creating your own unique subject line), make sure you include an explanation and give an example for each response. Please start the forum with your own response to the forum, then read at least 8 students posts, no need to respond to your classmates. This is an for-only posting assignment.

Questions: What practical reason identified in Chapter 1 was most compelling to you? Can you think of another reason you believe it is useful to study intercultural communication?

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**"Practice isn’t the thing you do once you’re good at it. It’s the thing you do that makes you good at it."**
CF 3-8: Instructions

After watching the short video, describe what you saw. After I read all e responses, I’ll post a response to your responses. Please post FIRST be your classmates’ postings. Posting is due on January 10 midnight. No discussion necessary here. You do not have to respond to your elasm however, make sure you read at least 8 posts AFTER you post yours. to contrast perceptions and refer to them in your next SGD.

4. Module II: Unit 2: Myblog results (January 11)

Share here the results of your myblogs.

- myblog 3.1 Discovering personal value dimensions (p. 45)
- myblog 2.2 Assessing your self-esteem and self-concept (p. 46)
- myblog 3.3 Discovering personal value orientations (p. 53)
- myblog 3.4 Assessing your independent versus interdependent self (p. 58)
- myblog 3.5 Assessing your horizontal versus vertical personality
- myblog 3.6 Assessing your internal versus external locus of control

Example: “For 3.1, the scores were: Distinctive, small power distance, and uncertainty avoidance patterns. For 3.2, the score was: Individualistic, collectivism; p = 0.00.”

At the end of the module, give us a general reaction about them. Which ones called you most? Do you think the results accurately represent your traits? In which do, in which they don’t? Is it useful to think about the different traits we’ve learned about? If not, why?

This assignment is due January 11th by midnight (EST). There is no need for your classmates.

7. Module III: Unit 4: High-low context (January 17)

Share the results with us and your impressions about your results from myblog results (January 11th) and your final results here by January 17th by midnight (EST). Be as succinct as you like. A successful succinctness: “I came out to be a high-low context. This is (no, because _____) You don’t have to respond to your classmates wish. Just read a minimum of 8 posts by your classmates.

8. Module III: Unit 4: Directness/indirectness (January 17)

Share with us here how does the exercise on direct and indirect comm
CF 9-13: Instructions

9. Module III: Unit 4: Rhetoric styles (January 17)

Share the results of the inventory on rhetoric styles with us and your about them here **” by January 17th by midnight. Be succinct, just tell us style is, and any other comment about it, if you like. You don’t have to i your classmates. Just read a minimum of 8 responses.

10. Module III: Unit 4: On facial expressions (January 18)

Post a reaction to the NPR segment that was aired on June 17 2008: W. Expressions Are Really Saying. What do you think? 50 - 75 words would http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php/storyid=91088964

There is no need to reply to your classmates. Just read a minimum of comments. Due on January 18th by midnight (EST).

11. Module III: Unit 4: Find your seven (January 18)

1. In your own words, write a definition of each of the following 7 essay appearance, pimlague, facial expressions, gestures, gesture, boundary (choose one of the seven categories under boundary regulations), and re
2. Look for two images that represent each category (on the internet or to real life objects or from magazines).
3. Post the assignment here by January 18th by midnight.

12. Module III: Unit 5: Perceptions of Dissimilar others (January 19)

Post here your perceptions. Think about where your ideas may come from in your mind? Did you find that the images of some groups are positive or are negative? Or were all pretty similar? Again, reflect on the why and do answers. (January 19th)

You don’t have to respond to your classmates. Read a minimum of

13. Module III: Unit 5: Strangers (January 20)

After watching the video, post here the answer to the following.
STOP: Please write your answers first before reading your classmates responses. (January 20)

- The clip’s story line (one short paragraph)
- Key symbols used (look at letters, music, ornaments, etc.). Name and tell us what they represent.
- Choose two key concepts from the chapter that are exemplified in the clip. Define the concepts and tell us what behaviors represent the concept.
- How do you make sense of or explain what happened?
- Do you know why some Muslims and Jews may be prejudiced against a person (historic context)? Does a historic animosity justify the treatment of young men toward each other? Why or why not?
- Which of the three concepts from the chapter—social profiling, a stereotypical image, and hate crimes—is illustrated in the clip? Explain.
Don't Let The Culture Shock Shake You!

Culture shock is what happens when someone finds themselves immersed within a different cultural situation, which causes them to experience issues with belonging and feelings of being out of place, an outsider, or somewhat disoriented. Culture shock doesn’t have to necessarily take place just when someone goes to another country, it can happen in many different situations. It can occur when someone is away from home for a while and can manifest itself as some being homesick or missing their friends. Remember, Culture shock arrives from the unfamiliar! I've had this personally happen to me as I attended Baltimore City schools for most of my life growing up. The facilities are not the best for the schools in Baltimore City, however I never knew any different as so many of my family members had experienced the same schooling systems. This changed when I switched to Baltimore County schools a few years later and almost everything was different; the style of teaching, the racial make up of the class, the subjects offered and even the hours the school was in session. This took some getting used to but ultimately I integrated fairly well.

Here are some tips to avoid culture shock:

- Expect differences when you travel into different situations. It’s a good way to mitigate any shock.
- Be open to new experiences. Overall you'll have a much better time and gain some great stories to tell!
- Don’t try to change your environment to what you’re used to. This a time to expose yourself to new things, not try to stay with what you know.
- Stay busy. It’s a good way to keep your mind occupied and not focusing on how bad you feel.
- Stay in contact with family and friends to keep you grounded!

Reverse culture shock is exactly what it sounds like, it's the reverse of culture shock aimed at when someone is re-immersing themselves into their former culture/situation. Similar feelings arise as with regular culture shock, but is more geared toward having to reorient one's self after being in another culture for too long. This can be particularly stressful because one might feel that they are losing their connection to the culture that they are used to. Many of my friends have experienced this personally due to a lot of them being first generation immigrants who often travel back to their home country from time to time. Typically, they stay for extended periods of time, ranging from three months to one year. As they usually are traveling to India, they describe that their return to America is definitely a case of reverse culture shock. They experience issues with jet lag, getting used to the time zones again, miss their relatives in India and also feel that they are becoming a bit too “Americanized.”

Some tips to avoid reverse culture shock:

- Remember, you’ve been here before! It’s just a matter of time before you re-orient.
- Talk about your experiences. It doubles have helping re-socialize as well keep our experiences fresh in your mind.
- Go and experience some of the common shared pass-times of your culture. It'll help you feel at home much faster.
- Share your feelings about culture shock. Being back home means you've got a strong support system already there to help you.
- Stay in contact with any friends/relatives you made in your cultural exchange. You'll keep those roots fresh and will be more mentally prepared to deal with your re-adjustment.

Word count: 581
This exercise pushed me to define myself on several dimensions of diversity, some of which I had never thought critically about before. Since I was a little kid, I never looked at people of other ethnicities or races as “others,” since my father had such diverse friends. As a result, I had many close friends from other countries, who in Saudi Arabia are often part of the impoverished working class. I first became aware of cultural identity when my Saudi friends questioned these particular friendships by saying, “but you are Saudi, and they are not.” I started thinking about what made my friends think that their ethnicity made them better than others, when we learned in Islam that is everyone is equal.

In considering how different aspects of my identity are perceived, I found that my family, my community, and I have similar perceptions across all aspects. The differences happen when considering perceptions of the mainstream culture to these three levels. In the mainstream culture, one’s actions are sometimes thought to reflect the entire community of people who fit into my ethnicity and religion. For example, in my community, Islam is expected and important to belong. However, in mainstream culture across much of the Western world, Islam has been portrayed as scary, radical, and dangerous. I would say that in instances where my identity fits into the privileged group in the world (age, gender, sexual orientation), there is little difference between perceptions across all four levels. This is because people who share these identities with me control the mainstream culture. However, I think that there is a difference when I belong to a group that does not have the power in the world (ethnicity and religion), because politicians and the media can affect mainstream culture into seeing these identities as the “other” and harmful to their position. This was an ah-ha moment for me.

Benefits and liabilities from my background change based on where I am. In Saudi Arabia, I am from a large and respected tribe, which can get me special treatment when dealing with office workers and police officers. Even in the U.S. I feel connection with other Muslims and brown people, and we look out for each other. I have gotten the “Muslim discount” before. However, in most cases in the U.S. being Muslim and Arab is considered a huge liability. Almost every time I return to the U.S., customs investigates me. This summer the reason I was given for the extra security was that my middle name is Mohammed.
CF12: Sample of students threads: *Perceptions on dissimilar others*

The perceptions that I came up with were mostly positive, however certain things that happen in the world raise negative views which come through the media. Along with the media many views we make up on certain groups come also from our upbringing, although sometimes these perceptions are able change as we experience first hand interacting with these different people. I do feel that some of the groups are positive whereas some are negative, but I feel that this depends heavily on personal upbringing and experiences. Unfortunately the media is able to determine how in which many people view different groups in our society and I feel that it is important to always keep an open mind. When first answering the perception of rich people my immediate reaction was stuck up, entitled, elitist all of which are negative perceptions. This whole mindset that I have on rich people comes from my middle class background and working for people from the upper class, I have felt on many different occasions being looked down upon by them.

When I think about stereotypes they obvious come from sources, such as family, school, society and media. It's already been fed in my head how I should look at certain type of people. All people have their own stereotypes about gender, race, and religion, yet most are negative. The exercise definitely had more negative than positive stereotypes. For example, I had to come up with a stereotype for "Muslims" and being a Muslim, the first stereotype that came to mind was "All Muslims are terrorists." Well, that's because that's what we constantly hear in the news, through social media, through people. It's not always intentional, but that's how the world wants us to perceive certain ideas and not have our own perceptions/thoughts. I believe looking at things from different perspectives can change the way we think and act towards others.

I think that perceptions or bias toward a certain group of people are learned at a young age. Usually this takes place in the family environment where you are molded to think the same as the people who raise you. Also your perceptions are shaped by the demographic and educational environment you are raised in. I thought for the most part, the images shared by my fellow classmates were all positive and well done.
3 Dimensions of Student Engagement
Online course: Assignment 2
Small Group Discussion Boards (SGDB)

- Small groups of 4/5 Ss
- Multicultural background
- Reflections in response to teacher’s prompts
- Exchange experiences, ideas, opinions
- 5 SGDBS

SGDB’s Posts are expected to show:
- constant self-reflection of own bias
- provide examples drawn from personal intercultural experience
- engaging conversation
- value the learning experiences
- development critical-thinking skills

TOPICS

- Module I: SGDB# 1- U1: Culture
- Module I: SGDB #2 -U1: Awareness of cultural identity
- Module II: SGDB #3- U2: On values
- Module II: SGDB #4- U2: On family and gender socialization

*No SGDB in Module III

- Module IV: SGDB #5 U.6: On conflict
SGDB 1-3: Instructions

Culture:

1. Define your own definition of culture. Don't look anywhere. Give examples. Always give examples.

2. Share with your group in which country you grew up and where your parents from.

3. Share two things you can perceive with the senses (smell, touch, sight, taste, sound), two behaviors and two intangibles from your culture(s). Make sure that you use one paragraph for #1 and one paragraph for #2 & #3 so it's easy for everyone to read.

Due on January 4th. Read to your group members by January 5 by midnight. Keep in mind the grading guidelines and that 2 responses earn you a C, three a B, and four an A (depending on quality).

My Example:

I define culture as a set of agreements that people make regarding how to live our lives, interact with each other and what to believe and what attitudes to have. For example, it was not common in Spain to leave your parent's house well before 18 years old unless you are going to study or work far away or are married. However, more recently and due to the economic crisis it is common to see some households where the grandparents live with parents and grandchildren as they cannot afford to live independently. Most people have agreed to that and don't expect for their children to leave the house until they are economically less independent regardless of their age. I call it an agreement because it is intangible and can be broken.

I was born and raised in the south of Spain and both of my parents are from Spain. The senses: The Spanish language in Spain is Spanish, although there are other co-official languages: Quechua, Catalan, and Galician. When you go to a market in Spain, you'll smell flowers, fish, raw meat, herbs and perfume, among many other smells may not be so pleasant (like trash).

Two behaviors: It is common to see people greet each other by hugging and kissing twice on the cheek. It is also common to see people eating food from street vendors. Two intangibles: Family tends to be an important value among many Spaniards, and respect for hierarchy is also a common tendency.

On Values:

Post here your initial answer to the prompt by January 10th by midnight. Write between 200 and 300 words.

Discuss your group mates' posts (remember to grade scale) and remember to reply to ALL of the reactions that you get on your initial post by January 11th. Please review the grading guidelines for quality responses if you need a refresher.

Prompt:

Before reading chapter 3, what are the essential value patterns? Recall a situation where you felt that your values were clashing with someone else's values (a boyfriend/girlfriend, your parents or siblings, a friend, a coach, your host family in a different country, a family member from a different country, a clerk at a store, a professor, a neighbor, a roommate... the list goes on). Tell us what happened, what values were involved on either side, and how you handled it. In being aware about values and how they influence behavior, is there anything you would do different now in that same situation? If you can't find an example of your own, talk to someone who can tell you about such an experience and share it with us.

Example:

My friend's son's birthday was last weekend and they were going to take him and his cousins ice skating. She suggested to her husband that they invite some other family member, but he said no because of the cost of the whole thing. She was insisting that they invite the extra family members, but he was insisting that they didn't. The primary value involved in his part, which was influencing his opinion, was being careful with spending (trying to control the expenses, so they didn't have a big bill); the primary value involved for her was relationship building and having a close family. As the book indicates, values are those intangible constructs that we deem important or unimportant. She could see how they were having a clash in values. She was getting frustrated thinking that he was cheap, but remembered their conversations about keeping their expenses in check and realized that he was actually honoring their agreement and being responsible in taking care of the family.

They negotiated the situation by her researching how much it would be (he thought it was far more than what it actually was/could and he realized he was being cheap). At the end, he
A. Example of SGDB: a student’s first posting

1) Conflict to me has meant some sort of disagreement between 2 groups that results in a debate on who is right and who is wrong. Generally it is in best interest to come up with some sort of compromise that satisfies both parties involved however this does not always work out in a positive way, leaving one of the groups unsatisfied with the outcome.

2) Conflict has always been handled differently depending on the situation. Although through the years I have noticed that my father will generally be more bull headed and aggressive in arguments to get his way. My mother is more laid back and generally will disagree to a point until she sees no point in furthering the argument and they eventually come up with a compromise.

3) I deal with conflict in many different ways, although I feel that conversation in a less aggressive manor generally works the best as you must be understanding on where the opposition is coming from with their point.

4) I would like to think I use both of their methods as I feel that they balance one another out in any type of argument.

5) I am definitely a mix of both, I feel that I am a very understanding person, however when certain things I feel strongly about or have a good sense of insight on I will stand my ground.

6) I have been told by people that I am brutally honest, which sometimes I feel is right and sometimes it is wrong as sometimes I look back on things and think that I should have said them differently to be less to the point.

7) I feel that my opinion has changed a little in how I associate myself with conflict, I generally do my best to avoid it however some circumstances call for it. I feel that learning adaptive conflict communication skills is extremely important as it would benefit my day to day life as you see different people each day you must always be able to react in a situation when you are involved in a conflict that will not result in an aggressive negative way.
B. Example of SGDB: students discussion on Cultural Identity

Hello Asad,

It sounds like you have a great family! I aspire to have a marriage like your parents, that is awesome that they have over 27 years together. I always wondered what it was like to grow up in a traditional family, as my parents have been divorced since I was five and it has been an adventure with changes since then!

It is also great that you were able to hold onto your culture after immigrating here. How does your family ensure that your original culture stays strong?

Great post!
Felice

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Hello Asad,

After reading your post I realized that the manual labor jobs were also left up to me and my brothers. However I likewise think it relates to age more so gender. Since if my sisters lived with me they would probably be expected to be help as well.

Do you wish you could spend more time on your cultural activities? And do you plan on continuing them as you get older?

Harold Handing
Re: Cultural Affiliation

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Hello Asad,

Nice post. I think most of immigrants have same position as you, practicing inside the house the inherited culture such as making especial dishes, speaking the native language, etc. I actually do the same.

Rocio Mendoza
Re: Cultural Affiliation
C. Example of SGDB:
1 student’s responses to other group members

Hello Fahad,
I liked your ah-ha moment, I can very well relate to that. There’s a lot more discrimination in Arab countries than in the U.S. especially if you’re not “Arab” or a citizen of that country. For instance, in Qatar, if you’re not a citizen it is so hard to find a “decent” job. Haha, what is a Muslim discount? I’ve never heard of that! My parents visited Pakistan in 2005, and on their way back they were held by security because my brother’s first name is Mohammed. However, over the years it stopped happening.

Hi Roshni,
I’ve always heard that Indians like their kids to have some knowledge of either Indian dance or music. Why is that, not that it’s a bad thing but is it considered cultural or religious? I was just wondering because some of the Hindu prayers have a lot of singing in it. For example, in Islam, it’s good to memorize the Quran but not everyone has to do it, it’s a choice. And many Muslim parents will have their kids memorize it in an early age because it is easier for them at that age. And obviously, there’s a greater reward for both the child and parent. I also believe respect is a very important part of our cultures. And I agree with you, women are always considered submissive ones no matter what the situation. I absolutely hate the fact that girls “aren’t” allowed to do pretty much anything in our “brown” culture. Some of my relatives in the States, still think I shouldn’t be allowed to work until I graduate college. “Because it might take me off track and make me want to drop out of college.” Reality makes me so angry sometimes.

Hi Sohli,
That sounds like some fun experience! I believe traveling plays a huge part in developing awareness for our culture and in realizing the things we take for granted. No matter where you travel, you’ll always learn how different our “American lifestyle” is from everyone else. I actually visited Pakistan after 10 years last January and it has changed so much. Some of my relatives that were millionaires at one time have nothing today. It is so sad to see how they’ve misused their wealth and resources. This made me realize how I’d never want to end up like them and the things I’ve been taking for granted all these years. I think it’s nice to travel because in a way
## Grading of CF & SGCBs: 1. initial post and 2. responses to classmates

### The initial post:

**A quality post:**
- Address all points from the prompts
- Includes relevant examples
- Adds relevant information from the book
- Links the book content to personal experience

**B quality post:**
- Addresses most of the points from the prompts
- Includes examples that may or may not be relevant
- Adds some information from the book
- Makes some connections between the book content and personal experience

**C quality post:**
- Addresses only a few of the points from the prompts
- Does not include examples or the ones included are not relevant
- Adds some information from the book in the wrong places or adds very little information
- Makes no connections between the book content and personal experience

### Responses to Classmates:

**A quality post:**
- Your posts are of great quality, you do most of the following: commented on your classmates’ posts, you added information, you brought up points from the book, you offered examples from your personal experience or from the media or your work, family, friends to agree or disagree with your classmates
- You react to at least 4 classmates per due date per GDB and consistently follow up when others reply to you.

**B quality post:**
- Your posts are of good quality, you do some of the following: commented on your classmates’ posts, you added information, you brought up points from the book, you offered examples from your personal experience or from the media or your work, family, friends to agree or disagree with your classmates
- You react to at least 3 classmates per due date per GDB and mostly follow up when others reply to you.

**C quality post:**
- Your posts are of OK quality, you do one or two of the following: commented on your classmates’ posts, you added information, you brought up points from the book, you offered examples from your personal experience or from the media or your work, family, friends to agree or disagree with your classmates
- You react to at least 2 classmates per due date per SGDB and inconsistently follow up when others reply to you.
Online course: Assignment 3- My intercultural journey

An opportunity to:

develop their intercultural competence by showing specific examples of their intercultural awareness and skills of cross-cultural aspects, self-awareness reflection, analysis of intercultural encounters, identification of samples of conflict, and assessment of current events in relation, personal experiences in relation to the course learning content.
Teacher’s roles: 3 dimensions of presence

1. Administrative presence - Course designer: syllabus, module structure, materials, exercises, assignments, videos tour, script, prompt CF, SBDG STEPS, Blog

2. Social presence - Course facilitator: send information, reminders, answer questions, avoid procrastination, foster critical reflection, focus on learning objectives, assure

3. Cognitive presence - Course evaluator: instruct, assess student’s learning process, meet objectives, read-read-read, comment, encourage, provide feedback, keep track, grade, request feedback and evaluate:
   - Quality Matters: Standardized online course assessment

*Constant self-reflection on the improvement of roles
*Intercultural learning experience
*GUIDE – MODEL – ENGAGE – LEARN - ASSESS

Figure adapted from R. Garrison, T. Anderson, L. Rourke et al Community of Inquiry Model (2007)
Examples of teacher’s instruction

WHAT IS A NAME? Our given name is probably our first and most important mark of identity. However, it was chosen for us. Naming babies across cultures differs according to customs, traditions, religious beliefs, family values or individual choice. Explain where your name/s and last names/s comes from, who gave you your first name and why? Is there any tradition related to the choice? What is the meaning?

Here is my example: My name is Elizabeth, British, equivalent name in Spanish is Isabel. It was chosen by my grandfather (just because he liked the name of a queen). Being born at the end of the Spanish dictatorship (1974 yes I know I look younger, right?) I was lucky not to have fallen into the forced/custom of being named “María” as a religious name attachment to any name. I would have been María Isabel or the other way around. Elizabeth is a biblical name Virgin Mary’s cousin. My last names, Arevelo it refers to the name of a city in the north of Spain so my ancestors are likely to come from that region as it was the custom to acquire your last name according to the area you are born. My second last name is (Hyphenated because Spain and Latin American follow father’s and mother last name (still a very chauvinist custom )) is Guerrero means warriors it is also likely that my ancestor on my mom’s side had that profession centuries ago.

Let’s get to know each other! Please tell us something about yourself that we probably would not learn in class. This “something” can be a random fact you feel comfortable sharing. In addition, tell us one thing you are looking forward to in our class! Finally, write a brief explanation of what thing you choose to identify with? Think of a fruit, flower, geometrical figure, animal, place, or thing that you identify with. Tell us what that is and why. Each of us has to follow up with at least one question to two other participants.

***ADD A PICTURE OF YOURSELF AND EXPLAIN IT!***

I highly encourage you all to read all posting so that you get to know each other, and comment to as many classmates’ posting as possible. It would be very interesting to identify similarities and differences among us. Please change the subject line in your reply to a short descriptor of yourself. Have fun with this assignment!

***If you see that someone has already questions from others, ask questions to those who still don’t have questions, or have the least amount of questions/comments.

Tip: It is common that those who post early get the most answers. The late posters usually don’t get responses, or get very little.

To get on the discussion forum, click on “Introductions” (the title of the forum).
- To post your own answer, click on “Create thread”.
- To read a post, click on it. Mine is called “a dolphin.”
- To reply, ask questions or comment on postings, you hit “reply.”
- Please do not post YOUR own intro under someone else’s.

PLEASE UPLOAD /ATTACH YOUR STUDENT PROFILE HERE in your first posting (no response)! You can find it here (and in the Orientation: Module 0 Tab on the left menu). Deadline January 2, 2017.

Student Profile.doc (14.5 KB)
Example of teacher as content/skills developer
Example of teacher’s feedback

https://blackboard.umbc.edu/webapps/discussionboard/do/forum?action=list_threads&forum_id=.74171_1&conf_id=.52678_1&course_id=.30875_1&nav=discussion_board_entry
Student evaluation

What are things that you liked about the class?
- Sharing stories with the classmates about my culture and experiences. (Zu.)
- I think I like everything. The topics of the book and the flexibility of the class. (Ro)
- Useful, helpful, interesting (Pu)
- Openness, free spirited, being able to express thoughts (He.)
- I like the SGBD, because it made the online class a little more personal. Giving topics to talk about on the assignments was also helpful. (Ha.)
- Being able to express my thoughts freely in a respectful manner. I really enjoyed sharing my own experiences and learning about concepts that I could apply to them and other situations. (Che.)

Anything else that you may want to add?
- Thanks for making the class accessible to all students!
- Thank You for a great winter semester. (So)
- It was a wonderful winter course, muchas gracias! (Fe)
- This course was really a help, thank you so much honestly you were there for me before the course had even started!! :) (Ni.)
- Thanks for a fun and engaging winter session! (Ki)
- Overall is awesome. (Pu.)
- Thank you for your time! (He.)
- Great class. (Di.)
- Thank you for a wonderful experience! I feel that I have a better understanding of my cultural identity and how to handle it. (Che.)

From 1 to 10, how would you rate the meeting of your expectations (once being not good at all, 10 being excellent).
- 10, we met all of my expectations for an online course and the discussions were better than I hoped for. (Zu)
- I would rate 10/10 because I enjoyed it greatly! (So)
- Above my expectation, (10! Ni.)

Did you have some “aha” moments (where something really made sense and you understood it at a deep level)? Please elaborate.
- I learned why people hastily jump into conclusions by observing other cultural norms that they are unfamiliar with, it is because they judge it from their culture’s point of view. (Zu.)
- Yes, lots of “aha” moments. I now have a better understanding of culture itself than I did before. I also learned how I should interact with people of different cultures. (Ni.)
- The first module that provided the ways we identify was pretty cool. I use a lot when thinking about how I identify personally. (Ki)
- When I learned about others’ experiences, I understood it at a deep level. (Pu.)
- I didn’t know that there were different types of conflict resolution ways. The categories surprised me because it made me realize that there is more to people’s way of life than what’s similar to mine. (He)
- I think my greatest “aha” moment was when we started learning about our different cultural lenses and how we should avoid using it in judging other cultures. I feel like I can be a better person with that skill under my belt. Also, I was excited to go in-depth for the ethnocentrism topic. I am an activist and felt that it definitely contributed to my knowledge because it helped me learn “why” people might hold social biases. Particularly, I was happy to learn specific terms, jargons, etc. (Che.)
Student-course evaluation

Please comment on the

- **discussion boards CF/SGDB:**
  - My favorite! Learned so much from these and I really liked my small group, some intelligent people they are! ((Ni.)
  - This really made the class fun and interesting. I liked reading about people's experiences. (Ki.)
  - I love the boards because there are a lot of ideas which came from real stories of classmates (Pu.)
  - Informative, interesting, fun to do (He.)
  They were convenient and well organized assignments. (Ha.)
  - Very fun! I feel like I got a lot out of the SGDB. (Che.)

- **unit readings:**
  - Interesting, not difficult to understand. (Ni)
  - They were short and easy to understand. They went nicely with the fast pace of the course. (Ki.)
  - Even though there are so much readings, I received new knowledge from it. (Pu.)
  - The text was not dull and not too many pages assigned. (He.)

- **the exercises/steps:**
  - A little complicated to follow along with at first. (Ni.)
  - This is really helpful. (Pu.)
  - The steps were clear and straightforward. (He.)
  - The exercise helped to form thought, and conclusions s for the CF/SGDB. (Ha.)

- **Lecturettes:**
  I actually read them unlike my other classes I never have the time to read power points since they're always soooo long. (Ni)
  They are also useful. (Pu.)
  - The power points were also concise and to the point. (He.)

- **My intercultural blog**
  - Fun! We had something new to do every week so it's nice to go back and reflect on what we learned each week. (Ni).
  - Interesting to write the blog. (Pu.)
  - Blogs are always fun! I loved that we can express ourselves with media and words. (He.)
  - The purpose of the blog is to get you to reflect on what material you had learned. So they were effective in their purpose. (Ha.)
Suggestions: Barriers/strategies for online students engagement (Briggs, 2015)

**Social**: build community
- Make first contact before the course beings
- Create an introductory activity
- Provide opportunities for learner interaction
- Encourage sharing

**Administrative**: contact, expectations
- Establish contact methods and hours:
- Provide directions often and in various ways
- Provide effective and timely feedback

**Motivational Barriers**: to keep student on track
- Chuck your content
- Send reminders to keep students on track
- Use variety of multimedia and modalities
Additional “strategies” for students engagement & critical reflection of intercultural communication

Foster students involvement at different levels: reflection/debriefing
  - design of assignments
  - course evaluation (1 expectations, 2 mid 3 final)
  - optional extra credit

Design meaningful and engaging activities, assignments aligned with learning objectives

Develop skills: encourage critical reflections (knowledge & personal experiences)

A social café to share interests; Ask questions section for clarification
Directions

- Add more media communicated communication synchronously
- Research: assess student’s engagement and critical thinking
- Improve the design and delivery
Online resources

Anderson, T., Rourke


Q&A