Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Resource Package

On Intercultural Pedagogy

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Revised for the Arts and Humanities Faculty by
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Dear Colleagues,

This package comes out of the collective exploration by members of the English Department of how to make Indigenization and internationalization work in our classrooms by building intercultural competence. The package contains suggestions faculty shared with us in workshops, emails, and conversations in 2014 and 2015, in addition to what Katharina and Dawn were able to add, all of which we hope will help us make the most of the growing diversity of our student body.

In February 2018, at the request of the Arts and Humanities Faculty Strategic Plan Sub-Committee on Diversity and Accessibility, the original resource package was revised, and materials that focused specifically on teaching literature were removed, with the hope that this shorter document will be a useful resource for all members of the faculty. The revisers would especially like to thank Katharina Rout for her hard work and dedication to this project. Her "Thoughts on Teaching Literature in Translation" was removed from this package because of its specific focus; however, it is a thorough and inspiring document by a practicing translator that might be of interest to many people for many different reasons. Anyone who would like a copy of it is welcome to contact Dawn Thompson for it.

SECTIONS

I. LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

Social Context

In 2014-15, VIU's 15,772 students included 1,313 domestic Aboriginal students, including First Nations, Metis, and Inuit, and 2,093 international students from 89 countries. The numbers in both groups are likely to rise, as Canada itself is changing.

According to Statistics Canada's *Aboriginal Demographics from the 2011 National Household Survey*, Indigenous peoples are Canada's fastest growing population group, and its youngest: "amongst the Aboriginal population, 46% of individuals are under age 25, compared to 29% for the rest of the Canadian population."

Additionally, in its 2010 report *Projections of the Diversity of the Canadian Population, 2006 to 2031,* Statistics Canada predicts a significant increase of the ethnocultural diversity of Canada's population over the next two decades. The report's highlights include the following projections:

- "36% of the population under 15 years of age in 2013 [will] belong to a visible minority group."
- By 2031, persons whose mother tongue is "neither English nor French" will make up "between 29% and 32%" of Canadians.
- "In 2013, nearly one Canadian in two (46%) aged 15 and over would be foreign-born or would have at least one foreign-born parent" (Malenfant, Lebel, and Martel).

Challenge

The ethnocultural diversity in our classrooms—which often comes with linguistic, social, and religious diversity—can mean silence, unease, even outright conflict. Little wonder that, at times, teaching feels more challenging than ever. Most domestic students do not benefit from the institutional internationalization process, while international students often come from more homogenous societies and lack intercultural competencies themselves. Many Indigenous students feel like complete outsiders in a university context.

These challenges should not surprise us. According to Milton Bennett, interacting constructively with those who are different from us is not a natural behaviour for humans. Bennett asserted in 1993 that for people from different cultural backgrounds to communicate effectively, they must first be prepared for their interactions. This idea builds on Gordon Allport's 1954 Contact Hypothesis, which stated that particular conditions must exist in order to reduce prejudice between members of different groups. Preparation eases the process, although we have found that other strategies, such as those listed in this document, can work to create these conditions as well.

Clearly, however, exposure to diversity in a classroom alone is not transformative; sitting in class with a diverse group of learners will no more lead to intercultural learning all by itself than travel to foreign places does. Instead, engagement and reflection are crucial for intercultural contact to lead to intercultural learning and inclusiveness.

Opportunity

When students in the highly diverse classroom are prepared by their teachers to interact with each other and learn from the interaction, or when real intercultural communication in our classrooms succeeds through other strategies, our students learn more about themselves, each other, and the world; our teaching becomes easier and more rewarding; new friendships can arise, prejudice and racism recede, and steps towards reconciliation be taken.

"Diversity enhances creativity," Katherine W. Phillips argues in "How Diversity Makes Us Smarter." "It encourages the search for novel information and perspectives, leading to better decision making and problem solving."

This is, of course, especially relevant for our classrooms:

> [R]acial and ethnic diversity matter for learning, the core purpose of a university. Increasing diversity is not only a way to let the historically disadvantaged into college, but also to promote sharper thinking for everyone. (Levine and Stark)

Ultimately, intercultural education—as opposed to merely attracting more Indigenous and international students and adding Indigenous and international content to our curriculum—benefits all players. Minorities can recognize each other as allies, and all participants develop their capacity to contribute to the intercultural development and exchange of knowledges.

Institutional Context

In fact, the *Arts and Humanities Strategic Plan* commits us to such goals:

- "We are committed to further develop intercultural competencies and to promote diversity by strengthening our First Nations program and engaging with Indigenous communities, by increasing collaboration with International Education and regional cultural groups, and by accommodating disability." (1-2)
- "We believe in equity, inclusiveness, and the recognition of cultural diversity." (5)

In order to "foster and develop multimodal literacies and diverse ways of knowing," we agreed to

- "Share knowledge about cultural identities and literacies, and teach intercultural competencies"
- "Seek ways to increase Indigenization of the curriculum and enhance collaboration with Aboriginal communities"
- "Seek ways to increase Internationalization of the curriculum by inviting international students to share individual cultural experiences with our classes" (8).

And so as to "celebrate human diversity in all its dimensions and maintain learning and working environments which are equitable, diverse, and inclusive," we recognized that we needed to "recognize cultural diversity in our curricular and pedagogical choices" (14).

International Context

Our Faculty's Strategic Plan obviously matches VIU's Strategic Plan. It also responds to a global need, as laid out in UNESCO's 2013 *Intercultural Competences: Conceptual and Operational Framework*:

> *The UNESCO World Report: Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue* makes it clear how crucial it is to acquire a cultural literacy to understand cultures in their creative diversity: "This is a new kind of literacy, on par with the importance of reading and writing skills or numeracy: cultural literacy has become the lifeline for today's world, a fundamental resource for harnessing the multiple venues of education can take [...] and an indispensable tool for transcending the 'clash of ignorances.' It can be seen as part of a broad toolkit of worldviews, attitudes and competences that young people acquire for their lifelong journey. The advocacy for linguistic and cultural diversity within education is an awareness-raising campaign in need of holistic and official recognition at the highest possible levels in order to convince all parties of its benefits and relevance" (UNESCO, *Cultural Diversity* 118; qtd. in UNESCO, *Intercultural Competences* 8-9)

Intercultural Competencies

Intercultural competencies are generally understood to comprise attitudes, knowledge (including cultural self-awareness), and skills.

To clarify intercultural competencies, UNESCO's *Framework* document offers Darla Deardorff's summary of the "skills and competences understood as the minimal requirements to attain intercultural competences":

- Respect ("valuing of others");

- Self-awareness/identity ("understanding the lens through which we each view the world");
- Seeing from other perspective/world views ("both how these perspectives are similar and different");
- Listening ("engaging in authentic intercultural dialogue");
- Adaptation ("being able to shift temporarily into another perspective");
- Relationship building (forging lasting cross-cultural personal bonds);
- Cultural humility ("combines respect with self-awareness").
  (UNESCO, *Intercultural Competences* 24)

Deardorff's summary will resonate with any English teacher: these are skills and competences that literature helps to teach. Indeed, much of what we already do promotes intercultural learning, as our discussions in 2014 and 2015 about our experiences with diversity showed.

We are grateful for your generous sharing of ideas. Please feel free to pick and choose what you wish from what follows, and we welcome feedback and additions to make this resource package a work in progress.

Dawn Thompson
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II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Because intercultural competence comprises attitudes, knowledge, and skills, simply adding individual texts to our curriculum won't suffice: We need a holistic approach to foster a general temperament and an attitudinal and epistemological shift.

- ATTITUDES: An open, sensitive approach must precede specific endeavors. We can teach by modeling humility, and specifically cultural humility, respect, and generosity of spirit.
- KNOWLEDGE: Cultural knowledge may require a broadening of our curriculum. But we can also acknowledge diversity in the most traditional English texts, by calling attention to its presence (and absence). Often cultural awareness comes from what we do with the material, as much as from the material itself.
- SKILLS: Skills are developed through active learning and student-centred approaches, especially through collaborative projects in and out of class.

Working backwards from learning outcomes is an effective way to building intercultural competencies (and has been successfully used at Thompson River University): When internal outcomes (reflection) and external outcomes (collaboration) complement each other, the learning becomes transformative.

III. PREPARING STUDENTS FOR INTERCULTURAL CONTACT

Not addressing diversity in a classroom may lead to mutual avoidance. Minority students may retreat into their respective solitudes, while domestic, non-Indigenous students may not even be aware of their own inability to connect; neither group will build intercultural competence. Many experts in the field therefore recommend that teachers create scenarios and exercises early in the term that help students to become more aware of culture, including their own, and to gradually develop the positive attitudes of openness, curiosity, humility, and willingness to engage. Such awareness and attitudes will lay the foundation for acquiring the knowledge and skills that build intercultural competence. Exercises and hand-outs mentioned in this section can be found in the Appendix.

- Introduce the iceberg or onion metaphor and use the Cultural Values Orientations assignment to illustrate how complex—and often hidden from view—much of culture is especially to those who belong to it.
    - Cultural identity = gender, religious background, socio-economic, age, geography, sexuality, etc.
    - We can't avoid seeing "others" through our own cultural glasses. If my culture's lens is yellow, and another culture's is blue, the best I can see is green.
- Start with commonalities, not with appearances, stereotypes, or a focus on difference. Let students discover the commonalities that bind them together and help them to see themselves in the "other." An appreciation for their different perspectives can follow.

- Ask students about their own culture and how they got here, and how they see their education helping them to reach their goals.

- Acknowledge that many students have come a long way, literally and/or figuratively, to get to university, and that this took courage and perseverance. This acknowledgment can be the beginning of the formation of relationship and trust.

- Let students articulate how they want to be treated in class.

- Spell out your own expectations. It helps students unfamiliar with Canadian university classrooms. See Wilfrid Laurier University's Intercultural Development Office—Centre

  for Teaching Innovation and Excellence: "Top 10 Ways for International Students to Succeed" (LeGros) for points that you may want to mention.

- Acknowledge the cultural specificity, and limitations, of the dominant academic genre, the essay, and speak about the value of other ways of communicating knowledge.

- Form random groups by using playing cards (show them names of suits), coloured paper clips, or chocolate bars. Or use commonalities: everyone who has a sister, then a sister and brother. Or, to prepare for teacher-designed groups later in the term, do an assessment in first class, perhaps on strengths and weaknesses (Reading, Writing, Talking, Listening), academic interests, communication styles, or possibly values and attitudes (note: the latter presupposes an attitude of openness and curiosity and may be more appropriate at a later stage).

- For more interculturally sensitive and effective ways of forming groups, see Dianne Hofner Saphiere's "Ten Surefire Ways to Divide Into Groups" at her Cultural Detective blog.

- Introduction to group work in first-year courses: First, explain benefits of group work and assure students that they will not have to meet outside class time and will be graded on individual merit. Then form random groups of three or four, let students introduce themselves to each other, and ask for a volunteer recorder and speaker in each group. Ask groups to identify commonalities they share—beyond being students at VIU—and one thing that makes each group member unique. After the speaker has reported back to the class, ensure that there is a question or feedback for each individual group member as well. Point out that all group work in the rest of term will be as straightforward and easy.

For many more exercises, with the handouts to support them, go to *Building Cultural Competence: Innovative Activities and Models,* edited by Kate Berardo and Darla K. Deardorff. Or invite VIU's Mackenzie Sillem to visit your class. As you incorporate some of these strategies, please remember Deardorff's process model (see Appendix): Developing intercultural competence is un-ending and requires reflection.

The following webpages may be very useful, both for students and faculty, for information on specific cultures.

- Centre for Intercultural Learning: "Country Insights. Cultural Information—Canada"

- The Hofestede Centre: "Cultural Tools—Country Comparisons"

VIU's library also has a libguide on intercultural education:
http://libguides.viu.ca/intercultural

Finally, Kyra Garson at Thompson Rivers University has published a very comprehensive online guide, *A Globally Minded Campus: A Resource for Academic Departments*, that offers a wealth of suggestions many of which are applicable to our situation.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR READING-INTENSIVE COURSES

Some general principles can help *all* students, regardless of ethnocultural background, but will be especially helpful for non-native English speakers and students who are first-generation to university:

- To help students with their readings, give them as much of a head start as possible by sending out reading assignments early.

- In class, let students work with passages from their readings in carefully structured ways: summarize first, then paraphrase, then respond.
- If students struggle or come unprepared, work with short passages from the readings, starting with reading them aloud.
- Use classroom time to teach how to annotate texts and discuss other reading strategies.

Reaching out to colleagues in other disciplines and team-teaching can help to foster more intercultural opportunities (see, for example, INTR 103, with mostly Central European literature), as can simply inviting colleagues to a class when teaching texts they might have an interest in. The open classroom allows for more diverse perspectives.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ASSIGNMENTS

General suggestions for writing assignments:

- Have students reflect on classroom experience in a journal assignment or blog so quiet students can articulate their views and faculty gets feedback.
- Introduce autobiographical elements that are not limited to particular cultures into assignments.
- Reflection paper assignments that are both metacognitive and personal can be adapted to almost any course. They take students a step beyond journaling, both formally and in content. They can be written in response to a reading or class discussion and allow more freedom than an essay. Adapted from Indigenous theories of interpretation and pedagogy, they tend to be *personal*, *holistic*, *processual*, and *situated*. Thus they challenge academic approaches, and, especially when they work as a series of assignments, can lead to transformational learning. For more explanation and examples, see the sample assignments attached to Section IX: Thoughts on Working with Indigenous Students
- Include one assignment (journals are ideal for this) that is not marked for grammar.
- Encourage students to find their own voice and mean it; allow space for them to experiment with pushing the boundaries of the essay, once they have mastered the basic form.

Suggestions for in-class essay exams:

- Remind students to specifically proofread for errors that were identified in their earlier writing.
- Encourage students to signal with an asterisk or similar any spelling they are unsure about.
- Or let students use (print) dictionaries. Teachers in AP5 allow unilingual dictionaries, but you may want to allow bilingual ones for international students and / or thesauruses for all students since both are useful only when students have already mastered the basics anyway.

Suggestions for assignments

- Report on a cultural event related to their discipline: There are many events that occur at VIU or in Nanaimo throughout the year that provide students with experiences beyond their own culture. The objective of this assignment is to have students take a wider view of their world. Each student has to seek out an event or meeting that is outside "the range of the familiar." Students may attend events at the International Students Centre or on campus (e.g., a lecture by a speaker during International Development Week), a sporting event or a foreign film from cultures unfamiliar to the students, etc. Students may be asked to include a comparison to their own culture. (This assignment stems from an assignment in INTR 103 that was adapted from Geography courses, with Pamela Shaw's permission.)

- Assign research topics that allow students to learn more about their own interests and/or use their own cultural examples, for example, the global effects of climate change (or the effects in one part of the world), or the use of digital media to revitalize threatened languages, or in education.

VI. TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Model for the class how to listen as an ally and how to affirm each other. Draw attention to the fact that we all learn in different ways (process / results / reflection).

- Be transparent; be conscious of your assumptions. Many students do not have the same ones.

- Share the spotlight. Let Indigenous and international students share their stories. Approach them first outside class to invite them to speak about their culture, country, family, etc. This will engage them, create respect for them and their experiences and knowledge (and diminish the focus on a struggle with English), and will help us make use of them as a resource.
- To accommodate students who for linguistic or cultural reasons hesitate to ask questions in class, finish class early in favour of a question period, or invite questions on index cards that you collect at the end of class and answer at the beginning of the next class. A general question to the class—"Any questions anyone?"—will rarely work.
- Let students write on index cards that will be exchanged among students for discussion.
- In a lecture, pause, ask students to summarize. Do this two or three times. Then get them into groups (or first into pairs, then groups), letting them take turns reading each other's summaries and improving their own in the process.
- Give each student a task, then ask them to teach another student what they have learned.
- Consider "seeding" speakers for class discussions.
- See Section III (above) on how to form groups in ways that avoid marginalization of Indigenous and international students.
- Reflect and have class discussion about culture-specific writing styles and genres.
- Regularly reflect on what is being learned and how: meta-cognitive strategies to develop independent learning skills.
- Teach and apply the Aboriginal practice of "witnessing," another meta-cognitive strategy, by asking each student to witness what was learned in a class during the term.
- A relaxed, good atmosphere is crucial and may be helped by goofy exercises, including some physical activities. Get the students out of their chairs and have them move around the room.

VII. IN-CLASS EXERCISES

- In-class writing: give descriptive feedback, not referring to grammar rules, so that writers don't become defensive.

- Acknowledge that essay organization is culturally determined. Some cultures prefer indirectness, the gradual emergence of an argument, enriching detours, etc. over the directness, linearity, and clarity we teach when explaining thesis statements and topic sentences. Acknowledging such cultural differences benefits not only international and Indigenous students but also domestic students, who will gain a better understanding of rhetorical strategies they may encounter in texts or oral exchanges.

- Demonstrate how interpretation of a text reflects cultural knowledge and experience, as well as the Indigenous idea that people take what they need from a story.

VIII. MARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

Before assignments are due

- Let students discuss the assignment in groups and collect and address any questions they may have.

- Show students samples of successful assignments.
- Be transparent about your grading principles. Explain, for example, that preposition errors are not enough to fail an essay, but that a significant number of sentences that do not make sense is.

Marking the assignments

- If you mark writing, do not over-mark a paper. Too many comments and marking symbols are overwhelming, disheartening, and impede learning, particularly for international students, who may still struggle with a whole range of linguistic challenges. Rather, use one or combine some of the following strategies. Always be transparent about your marking practice.

    - Fully mark only a section or two of a paper (not the first page, as it often has more problems than the following ones).
    - Focus on two or three of the most urgent problems and show the student how widespread the issues are in his or her paper. For example, mark all fragments but ignore other syntactical errors. This approach tends to be more helpful than marking only one page, or even just one paragraph, either of which may be so riddled with errors that the student feels overwhelmed. Be sure to explain this strategy in advance, for example on the assignment handout, to let your students know that there may be more problems than you identified this time and that you will use your professional judgment in offering more feedback over time, thus minimizing the risk of arguments over grades. Offer to give them more extensive feedback in your office hour should they wish for it.

    - Revise a few sample sentences, suggesting a couple of alternatives, with explanations.

One of the benefits of minimal marking is the shorter time it will take to mark poorly written papers.

- Descriptive marking of grammar and syntax can also be helpful. One doesn't necessarily have to name the specific error, but can give more general feedback regarding clarity, sense and "grammar issues." Students can get more specific help at the Writing Centre.

- Reconsider writing your comments in paragraph format. Feedback from international students shows that students benefit far more from lists, in point form (for example, strengths and weaknesses).

- Print or type your comments. International students, many of whom use a different writing system in their native language, find cursive nearly impossible to read. Apparently, younger domestic students, too, are struggling. Typing, or even emailing comments, allows you to keep a record of them, and if emailed, the student's responses.

- Remember that it takes repeated efforts to create awareness and change linguistic habits. A one-time explanation of fragments and of strategies to avoid them will likely reduce the numbers of fragments in the next essay but not completely solve the problem. Be patient. Other linguistic features (e.g., the correct use of prepositions) will take years and much exposure to oral and written English before they become second nature.

- Give more shorter assignments as stepping stones for the longer essays, which will benefit the students not least because research tells us that "the frequency of feedback is more important than getting high quality or individualized feedback" (Erin Aspenlieder qtd. in Peters).

IX. SOME THOUGHTS ON WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

- Dawn Thompson Mar. 2016

Because most Canadian Indigenous students are well-versed in the dominant Canadian culture, it is easy to forget the value of an intercultural perspective for them. However, for those who are educated in their own culture, the differences are vast. And even if they are not, many still often find university to be almost a "foreign" culture.

The following suggestions may seem very basic; many of us are already aware of, and perhaps already do, much of what follows. However, what I have learned over the years is that I need to do it all more consciously, transparently, and with my audience in mind. And as I do so, I notice a subtle yet profound shift in my teaching and my relationship with my students. It all becomes more holistic. I offer the following simply as suggestions to think about.*

Indigenous pedagogy has been strongly influenced by Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt's notion of the four R's, which places

> an emphasis on the need for a higher educational system that *respects* [Indigenous students] for who they are, that is *relevant* to their view of the world, that offers *reciprocity* in their relationships with others, and that helps them exercise *responsibility* over their own lives. (1)

The following are practical suggestions for welcoming Indigenous students in the classroom, and specifically, English classrooms. I have added the words *relationship* and *reconciliation* to Kirkness and Barnhardt's "R's"; I hope the reasons for doing so will be clear.

Respect

While Indigenous identities are complex and not all Indigenous students are alike, it is important to remember that many Indigenous students have overcome multiple challenges in order to get to university, and face many more while being here. Empathy, compassion, and flexibility are appreciated.

Start courses with the protocol of acknowledging that this is the territory of the Snuneymuxw.

Where possible, include curriculum by Indigenous writers, or from Indigenous perspectives, not as a token example, but as part of a curriculum that recognizes and respects diversity:

- include positive images (too often, where they are present, they are negative, or are framed as a deficit); or if the reality is negative, contextualize it to decrease shame;
- where possible, refer to specific peoples; the few seconds it takes to look them up can make a world of difference. It's okay to mispronounce names; someone may well teach you how they are said!

Show respect for Indigenous knowledge; it is held in narrative, so there is a deep affinity between it and literary disciplines -- they can be seen as similar ways of knowing.
However, where literary scholars tend to discuss literature in essays, Indigenous knowledge is often communicated in the narrative mode. It is

- implicit (to explain can be seen as an insult to one's interlocutor's intelligence, or forcing them to learn what the writer thinks they need rather than what they think they need);
- personal (we each take what we need); knowledge extends only as far as one's own reach;
- holistic (mental, spiritual, physical, emotional);
- processual, or tentative, contextual, and cyclical.

Of course, all students need to master the skills of academic writing and their discipline, but even acknowledging the fact that this is a specific, culturally-defined context for writing, and showing awareness of other valid ways to communicate knowledge will have a positive effect. And an awareness of other modes of thinking can open one's own eyes to strengths in students' writing that might not be immediately apparent.

As well, developing even just one assignment that allows students to write about what they know, to respond to and reflect on what they are reading in a personal way, makes space for Indigenous thought to take its place. This kind of metacognitive exercise can also be transformative for various students in many different course contexts. A sample exercise, with two adaptations for different courses, is appended to this section of the resource package.

Relevance

In addition to showing "an institutional respect for indigenous knowledge,"

> The university must be able to present itself in ways that have instrumental value to First Nations students; that is, the programs and services that are offered must connect with the

> students' own aspirations and cultural predispositions sufficiently to achieve a comfort level that will make the experience worth enduring. (Kirkness and Barnhardt 8; 4)

This is a tough sell with all students, as the dominant culture values the arts and humanities less and less. But writing empowers people; by introducing academic writing and argument as strategies that are useful in university and transferable to other contexts, and by recognizing their cultural specificity and limitations, one can illustrate their practical value while acknowledging the value of other ways to communicate knowledge.

Reciprocity

The hierarchical relationship between professor and student is part of the dominant Western construct of thought, knowledge, and institutions. Most of us already break that in fostering discussion and debate, and valuing students' experiences and interpretations. An intercultural approach values the cultural backgrounds of all students and what they bring to the discussion. However, subaltern students are often hesitant to speak up.

Giving each a chance to talk, without judgment, without comments or probes, and with a pass if necessary, can be a way to allow their voices to be heard, without singling any student out. But it needs to be done more than once in order to work.

- A sharing circle of first responses to a text can be a good way to start. The elders say that one should always move in a counter-clockwise direction.
- In another variation on this, I ask for a one-word response, put each word on the board, and then when everyone has contributed, I ask for more elaboration on those words, opening a larger and freer discussion and drawing links between the comments.

Sharing food, at least once in a while, undermines that institutional relationship; and students can be encouraged, without expectation, to bring it, too.

Key to reciprocity is **Relationship,** and key to relationship is trust: for me, it is the first issue, and one of the hardest. The intergenerational effects of residential schools are such that many Indigenous students are coming in with a deep distrust of educational institutions. Most, if not all, have experienced racism, both intentional and unintentional.

They need to know that there is the chance, in your classroom, for a different experience.

- Start the course with the protocol of acknowledging that this is the territory of the Snuneymuxw. (This was already mentioned under "respect," but it bears repeating, as respect is the foundation of relationship).
- Try introducing yourself, and asking students to introduce themselves, using local protocols (there are workshops offered on this fairly regularly).
- Draw attention to and acknowledge the negative effects of racism wherever the class encounters it.
- Acknowledge the value of Indigenous knowledge.
- Or at least recognize that there are different ways of knowing, that what we are doing in class is one way of approaching knowledge, and that it has limitations.
- Acknowledge what you do not know.

The “student interviews” on this website from the First Nations Studies Department at UBC can be very eye-opening: *What I learned in Class Today: Aboriginal Issues in the Classroom*: http://www.whatilearnedinclasstoday.com/

Responsibility

Recognize that there are different notions of success. That of faculty members tends to be limited to good grades, but cultural duties may well take precedence for some students. As much as possible, how can one accommodate that?

At the same time, Indigenous students are at university because they want to walk in both worlds; they want the tools and advantages that a university education can give them. Some of those include commitment. Frame it in this way.

Acknowledge the challenging life situations of many Indigenous students. Many will not talk about all that they are dealing with, and will not ask for extensions or help. Some flexibility with time issues does not need to be seen as giving certain students an unfair advantage. Equality does not equal sameness.

Finally, the current context of **Reconciliation** presents, for all of us if we wish, an opportunity to reflect on our responsibilities to Indigenous students and the role we can play in the process of reconciliation, as educators.

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*Other than Kirkness and Barnhardt, I have eschewed citations in this document because most of it comes from what I have learned in the classroom, either as teacher or student. Much of it I have encountered more than once from different sources (and it took more than once to get it). Thus I would like to acknowledge the teachings of, first, my many Indigenous students; then those of Elders Ellen White, Ray Peters, Gary Manson, Stella Johnson, and Geraldine Manson; and those of colleagues Melody Martin, Lillian Morton, John Swift, Sylvia Scow, and Sharon Hobenshield.

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Sample Reflection Papers Assignment:

This assignment is adapted from one I was given in the course on Learning to Be Together: Indigenous Knowledge and the Academy in 2014. Please feel free to adapt them, with credit given as I have done.

ENGL 221 – North American Indigenous Literatures: Reflection Papers Assignment

Length: approx. 600 words each
Value: 8% each (with 1% bonus for completion of all 4)
Due dates: spread throughout the term

Throughout this course, I am asking you to write four reflection papers in response to the texts we are reading/hearing. Please use the concepts and questions on the other side of this page to guide your writing. We will expand on these concepts, providing examples, in our discussions, especially in week 2. If you have questions, please ask them in class. Our discussion of them might help others as well, and it will help me to refine the assignment.

I would recommend that you make a practice of writing such a paper – or a draft of one, at least - after reading each of the texts on our list. This will help you to develop your interpretive strategies and your voice, and it will also likely help you to choose which papers to hand in. In many cases, I think you'll know, even as you are writing, which ones are the ones you want to share with me. I also recommend you do spread them throughout the term. If you decide to get them all out of the way right at the beginning, or leave them all until the end, you will not get as much out of the process, and it will show.

I will grade these reflection papers based on the following criteria, adapted from the English Department Grading standards.

- Evidence of engagement with the text to which you are responding;
- Evidence and development of your thoughts in response to the concepts and questions on p.2;
- Voice and style – make it your own!;
- Structure (organization, fluidity);
- Syntax, grammar, and spelling;
- Documentation of citations.

Please don't hesitate to come see me if you have any questions or concerns about this assignment.

This assignment, and some of the theoretical material behind it, is adapted from a course on "Learning to Be Together: Indigenous Knowledge and the Academy," led by Lillian Morton and John Swift in Spring 2014. John received them from Lee Maracle, who was instructed by the Elders at Shoat Lake, Manitoba.

ENGL 221 – North American Indigenous Literatures – Theories of Interpretation

Aboriginal theories of interpretation tend to be *personal, holistic, processual,* and *situated*.

Personal: Each of us takes from a story what we need at that moment. Sometimes it is something we want to hear, sometimes not (Littlebird 14). But in any case, your interpretation is correct. "Storytelling is open-ended rather than didactic, allowing listeners to draw independent conclusion from what they hear (Cruikshank 8).The story is speaking to you; why do you think it is saying what you are hearing? What are you learning from this story? Where is the story taking you? As Anishnabe author, Richard Wagamese, puts it, "books change you." How is this story changing you?

Holistic: when you read, pay attention to your whole response: mental, physical, emotional, spiritual. What strikes you? And where does it strike you? What do you find yourself doing, or wanting to do, as you read? Think about why that is. Where does your mind go? What thoughts arise? Memories? Emotions? Pause and follow them. Think about what spirituality means to you, and how what you read might touch it.

Processual: Each of us takes from a story what we need *at that moment*. Each time we hear that story, we might take something completely different from it. A new interpretation is not necessarily better, just different. Stories contain innumerable possible teachings; and they will often change, depending on the audience and the telling situation, accommodating new information and new purposes.

Situated: Stories are very often connected to place. They are grounded in people's real lives, and they connect people to place in profound ways, teaching them how to be. But they are not only local and particular. They provide a world-view; thus they accommodate and provide wisdom to adapt to the world (Cruikshank 21; Basso).

According to ethnologist, Julie Cruikshank, "Indigenous people who grow up immersed in oral tradition frequently suggest that their narratives are better understood by absorbing the successive personal messages revealed to listeners in repeated tellings than by trying to analyze and publicly explain their meanings… (4).

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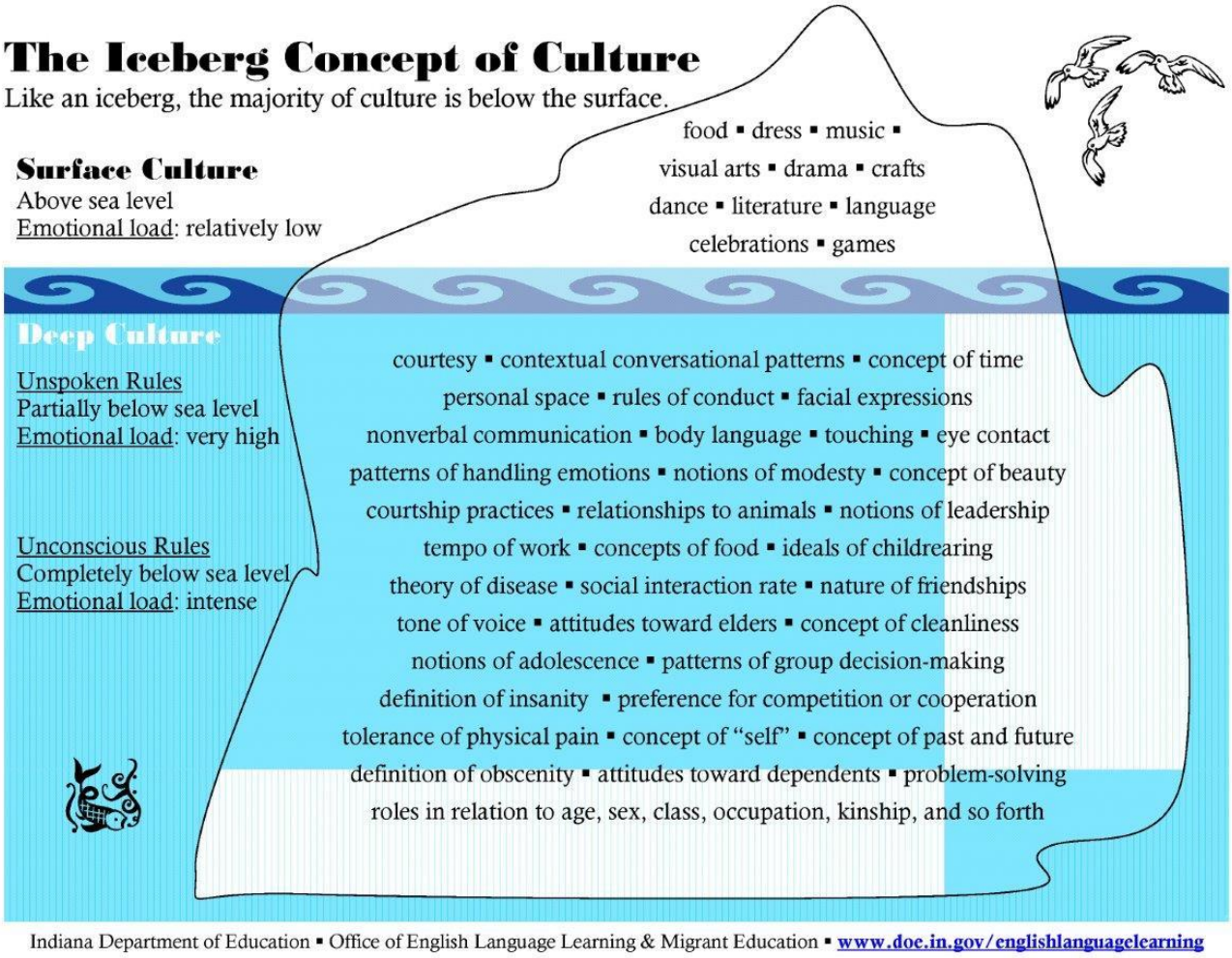
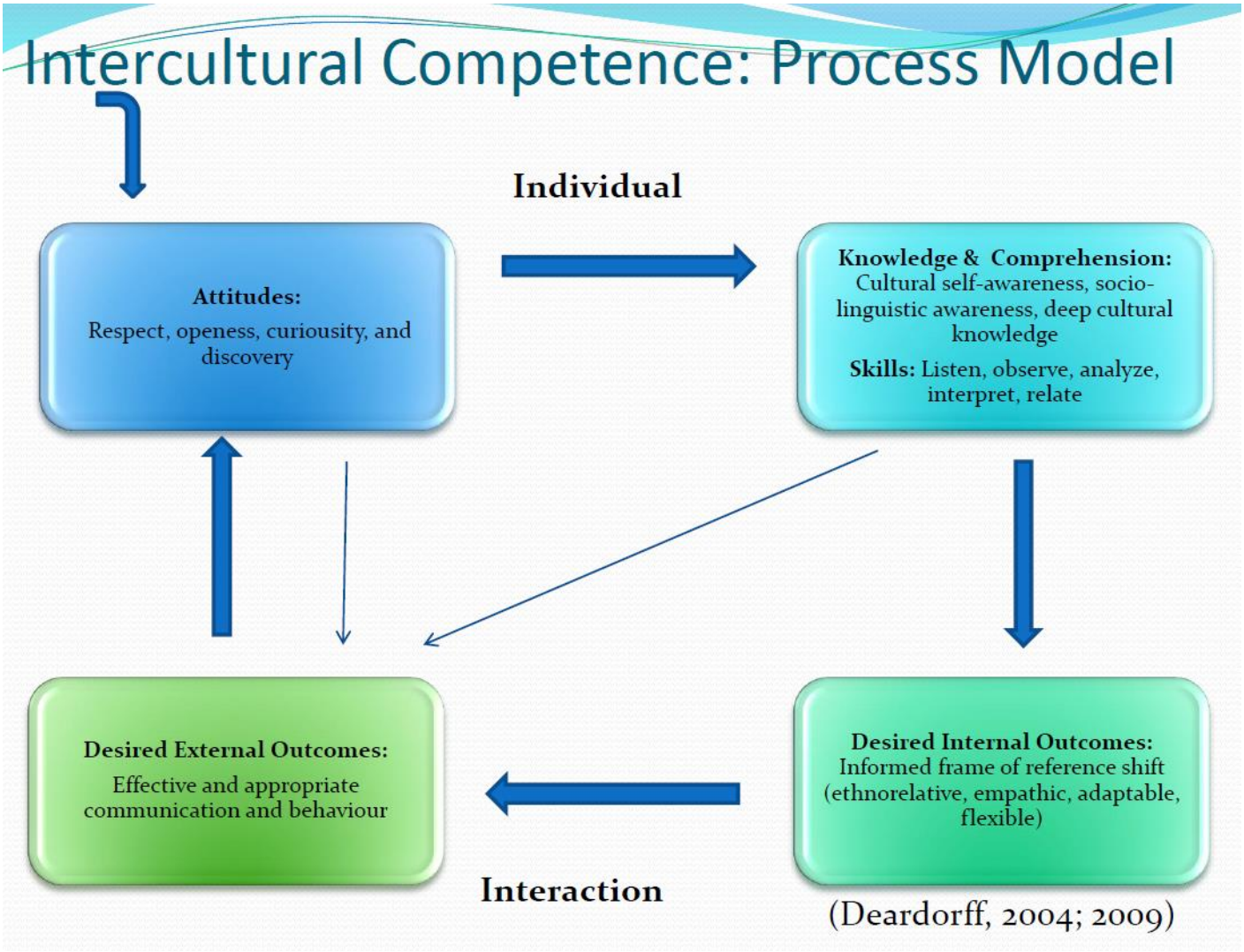
XI. APPENDIX: EXERCISES AND HANDOUTS FOR PREPARING STUDENTS FOR INTERCULTURAL CONTACT



Adapted from Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture* (1976).

Darla Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence



Common Ground

Purpose: to share, to listen actively, to find things in common between group members, physical warm-up (be careful, this can get rowdy!); this can inspire discussion on our perception of each other, as we learn in this game that we have more in common than we might initially think…

Activity Set-Up and Management:

1) The group is seated on chairs in a large circle, with space between the chairs.

2) There is one less chair than people in the group.

3) The person without a chair stands in the middle of the circle and takes her turn, stating the standard phrase of the game: "I seek common ground with people who…" and then finishing the phrase with something that she has, that she wonders if anyone else has too.

    a. The turn-taker could state a physical attribute (have blue eyes), a dream (wish to travel to Australia), a goal (want to become a lawyer), an experience (have gone scuba diving), as long as she has it – her statement could be obvious (are wearing shoes), or more ethereal (have love in their hearts).

4) Whoever has that thing in common self-designates by getting up from his or her chair and rushing to find an empty chair.

5) Whoever cannot find a vacant chair during this big (or 0small) switcheroo, becomes the person in the middle who says again "I seek common ground with people who…have their ears pierced!" inspiring others to move again.

6) An extra challenge is to make a rule that you cannot swap chairs with the one directly on either side; people must move at least two chairs away when switching.

Debrief:

a) How did that activity make you feel?

b) How might this help us as a team?

c) Were you surprised by your commonalities?

d) What is the purpose of this activity?

e) What would have made you feel more comfortable?

Adapted from: Boal, A. (2013). *The rainbow of desire: The boal method of theatre and therapy*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.

10 Friends

Person	Ethnicity/Race	Age	Education	Religion	Marital Status	Gender	Languages	Sexual Orientation
Me								

10 Friends

Activity Set-Up:

1) Hand out worksheets and instruct students to write the names of 10 of their friends under "Me" in the Person column.

2) In the "Me" row get the students to describe themselves according to each of the categories (for example in Marital Status put single or married or common law) the terminology they use does not matter.

3) Once they have completed the "me" row then students fill in the columns for their friends. If the friend is the same as them they would put an "x" if the friend is different from them then they will put an "o".

4) Once they have completed their sheets give them a minute to take in any information they read from the patterns of x's and o'x on their sheets.

Debrief:

a) Who do you learn the most from? (Who do you have the most interesting conversations or do the most interesting things with?)

b) Who do have the most fun with?

c) Are you friends with yourself? (i.e. someone just like you?)

Learning Points:

- Often we find we learn the most from our friends who have the most "o"s – this is diversity at work. Diversity can make us smarter!
- Introduce the idea of taking some risk – get to know someone who you think is too different from yourself to become friends with.
- Diversity in friends is important we need those friends who are so similar to us that much can be left unsaid and yet still understood, and we also need friends who push us outside our comfort zones, who help us to see the world in another way.

Voices from the Past

Activity Set-Up:

1. Tell students we are going to introduce ourselves in a way that is different than usual.

2. Show sample introduction sheet, and have them write on a sheet of paper

    a. Their name in the top left hand corner

    b. A culture they identify with in the top right hand corner

    c. Their role or profession (however they choose to define this) at the bottom center of the paper.

    d. Ask them to write in the center of the paper a quote or comment that contains a key message they heard from someone influential in their lives. Ask them to think back to their past and listen to the voices that stand out.

    e. Do the same for yourself ahead of time so that you can use yours as an example

Managing the Activity:

3. Introduce yourself first to set the tone

4. As others go show the type of openness I want to foster in the session among participants – encourage others to ask questions:

    a. When did you first hear that message?

    b. Why is that an influential message for you?

    c. What values are suggested by the quote?

    d. How has it influenced your life?

    e. When might you be influenced by this quote in your work this summer?

5. After introductions have been made have them post on the wall to create a collage of messages.

Debrief

    a. What do you notice about the messages individuals shared?

    b. Were there any surprises in what your colleagues chose to share?

c. How is this way of introducing yourself different from how you would usually introduce yourself? What is the impact of this?

Voices from the Past (cont.)

Key Insights &Learning

I. Every exercise offers an opportunity to interact with others on a personal level and in doing so, explore our identities.

II. We are flooded with all kinds of messages that we remember throughout our lives, but it is the messages that we remember that guide and shape us.

III. We have been carrying around many of these messages with us for a long time; we learn many of our values from a young age.

IV. We often choose what we tell others about ourselves based on trust and how safe we feel it is to share information.

V. We can learn interesting things about each other by interacting in less traditional formats.

VI. Being curious about yourself and others, and the messages that have helped shape us, is a critical component of intercultural competence development.

The Power Flower: Reflection on our Social Identities

Source: Barb Thomas, Doris Marshall Institute. Adapted from Lee, Letters to Marcia, as cited in Arnold, et.al. (1991)

Time: 45-60 minutes

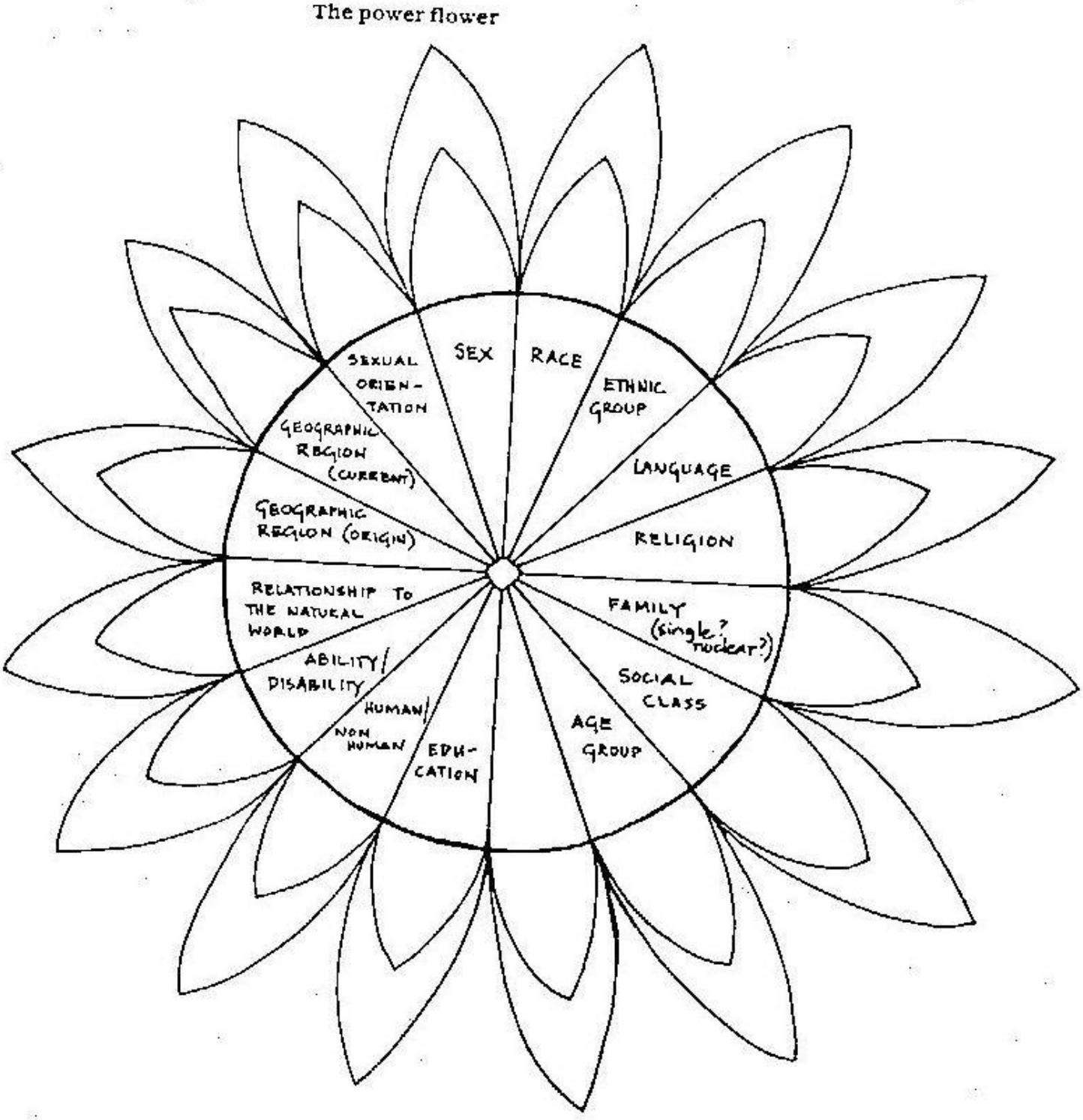
Rationale
Participants will identify who they are (and who they aren't) as individuals and as a group in relation to those who wield power in our society. This activity will also highlight discrimination as a process for maintaining dominant identities.

Materials
• The power flower drawn on large paper
• Individual copies of the flower as handouts
• A variety of coloured markers

Teaching/ Learning Strategies
1. Introduce the power flower, drawn on large paper and placed on the wall. As a group fill in the dominant social identity of the group on the outside circle.
2. Asking people to work individually or with the person next to them, hand out individual flowers to each pair. Ask participants to locate themselves on the inner blank circle.
3. The groups of two post their identities on the inner circle of the large flower as soon as they are ready to do so.
4. We review the composite as a group and reflect on:
• personal location: how many factors you have as an individual that are different from the dominant identity; what factors can't be shifted, changed?
• representation: who we are/ are not as a group - and how that might influence the task/discussion at hand?
• the relationship between and among different forms of oppression.
• the process at work to establish dominance of a particular identity and, at the same time, to subordinate other identities.

Variations
• Individuals fill in the inner circle of the flower before reflecting on the dominant social identity in the group.
• Using flip-chart paper, cut out large versions of the twelve different petals. Each petal should be large enough so that all participants can make an entry on it. Name each of the petals and spread them around the room. Participants circulate and record their personal identity on the inner part of the petal and the dominant identity on the outer part. Gather the petals in the centre of the room, and use as a catalyst for discussion as above.
• Use the power flower as an introduction to focus on one form of oppression. The flower was developed specifically for use in anti-racist work.
• List the words participants use to describe their own "ethnicity" and "race". Examine the two columns for differences. Use this as a take-off point for talking about race as a social - as opposed to scientific- concept.

Words of warning: Be very careful about asking students to fill in the petals. It may put students/participants who don't want to identify, for whatever reason, on the spot. For example you may have a gay student who is out to some people in the group but not to others who is uncomfortable when asked to fill in the sexual orientation petal. A variation may be to ask participants to look at the categories in the petals and make their own private list of categories they feel they fall into. No one needs to see if someone chooses not to fill out one of the petals. It is important to ensure that someone who is already feeling disempowered is not made to feel more so by an equity activity.



Source: Barb Thomas, Doris Marshall Institute. Adapted from Lee, Letters to Marcia, as cited in Arnold, et.al. (1991).

Cultural Values Orientations

How I live reflects on me as an individual.	1	2	3	4	5	How I live reflects on my family, friends, and colleagues.
People should use words to say exactly what they mean, no matter who they are talking to or what the situation – don't beat around the bush.	1	2	3	4	5	People should be indirect in their strong praise or criticism, using subtle words and references to convey the idea without causing loss of face.
People should deal with each other as equals, no matter what their sex, wealth, or social status.	1	2	3	4	5	People should treat some people with greater respect because of their status, based on wealth, sex, or social position.
Quality of life is more important than career success.	1	2	3	4	5	Career success is more important than quality of life.
Uncertainty is a normal feature of life and each day is accepted as it comes.	1	2	3	4	5	The uncertainty of life is felt as a continuous threat which must be fought.
I see time as limitless and schedule as flexible. It's not necessary to finish one thing before starting another.	1	2	3	4	5	People need to adjust to meet the demands of schedules and deadlines. It is best to work on one thing at a time.
Rules are more important than relationships, and should be applied evenly, regardless of who you are or what the situation is.	1	2	3	4	5	Relationships are more important than rules: rules should be adapted to fit the situation or relationship.

Based on the work of

Hall, E.T (1976). *Beyond Culture*. Toronto, ON: Doubleday.
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Six Phases of Debriefing

People don't learn from experience; they learn from *reflecting* on their experience.

I firmly believe this principle and keep preaching it to everyone. To me, all experiential learning activities (simulations games, roleplays, outdoor adventures, and other such things) merely provide an excuse for debriefing sessions.

You **must** conduct a debriefing discussion to help your participants reflect on their experiences, relate them to the real world, discover useful insights, and share them with each other. Debriefing also helps you to wind down the learning activity, reduce negative reactions among the participants, and increase insights.

A major dilemma in debriefing is maintaining a balance between structure and free flow. I suggest that you prepare several questions before the debriefing session. During actual debriefing, encourage and exploit spontaneous comments from the participants. If the conversation degenerates into a stream-of-consciousness meandering, fall back on your prepared list of questions.

I use a six-phase model to structure debriefing questions. Here are some guidelines for each phase of this model.

Source: www.thiagi.com

Question	Why?	How?
Phase 1: How Do You Feel?	This phase gives the participants an opportunity to get strong feelings and emotion off their chest. It makes it easier for them to be more objective during the later	Begin this phase with a broad question that invites the participants to get in touch with their feelings about the activity and its outcomes. Encourage them to share these feelings, listening
Phase 2: What Happened?	In this phase, collect data about what happened during the activity. Encourage the participants to compare and contrast their recollections and to draw general conclusions	Begin this phase with a broad question that asks the participants to recall important events from the training activity. Create and post a chronological list of events. Ask
Phase 3: What Did You Learn?	In this phase, encourage the participants to generate and test different hypotheses. Ask the participants to come up with principles based on the activity, and discuss them	Begin this phase by presenting a principle and asking the participants for data that supports or rejects it. Then invite the participants to offer other principles based on their
Phase 4: How Does This Relate To The Real World?	In this phase, discuss the relevance of the activity to the participants' real-world experiences.	Begin with a broad question about the relationship between the experiential learning activity and events in the workplace. Suggest that the activity is a metaphor
Phase 5: What If?	In this phase, encourage the participants to apply their insights to new contexts. Use alternative scenarios to speculate on how people's behaviors would change.	Begin this phase with a change scenario and ask the participants to speculate on how it would have affected the process and the outcomes of the activity. Then invite the participants to offer their
Phase 6: What Next?	In this phase, ask the participants to undertake action planning. Ask them to apply their insights from the experiential activity to the real world.	Begin this phase by asking the participants to suggest strategies for use in future rounds of the activity. Then ask the participants how they will change their real-world behavior as a result of the insights gained from the