

Civility/Sensitivity T-shirt Assignment

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Objectives

- To demonstrate that messages sent and received are not always the same.
- To introduce ideas related to audience analysis.
- To introduce students to Dewey's problem solving sequence.
- To reduce uncertainty related to communicating with disabled people.
- Increase sensitivity to populations other than the majority.

Approximate Time Required

10-minutes of class instruction while introducing task, assigning groups, and entertaining questions. Followed by 10- minutes of student generated discussion about disabilities and then 10-minutes to allow for first student group meeting (step 1 - problem solving sequence).

20-minutes of next class session to allow further student progress (complete problem solving sequence) while instructor performs a data check.

A full class period for brief student presentations and follow-up questions/discussion.

Materials Needed

Paper, poster board, desired art supplies

Rationale

In our society, it is increasingly important that graduates become sensitive to the needs of others in the name of civility. This change must begin with the evaluation of the way we perceive and communicate with others. We cannot begin to be effective communicators if we fail to recognize and adjust to these needs. This assignment allows students exposure to one particular area of needed sensitivity while applying theories/ideas learned throughout the term.

Things To Do Before Class

Introduce students to Dewey's problem solving sequence.

Create and make enough copies of the assessment tool for presentation.

What To Do During Class

First Class

Distribute "T-shirt Assignment" handout, review task, assign students to groups, and entertain questions.

Start a 10-minute, student-centered discussion about disabilities. Find out what the students know or think they know.

Require students work in their groups for 10 minutes. During this time, walk about room to ensure students are on task.

Second Class

Review Dewey's problem solving sequence and aid students in applying the steps to the assignment.

While students are working with their groups, walk around the class and check students homework (data check).

Third Class

Require each group to present their final product without verbal explanation. Audience must critically analyze the product and ask questions challenging the ideas presented. Groups will be responsible for entertaining all audience questions.

Because all groups researched disabilities, thought provoking questions related to people with disabilities should follow.

Audience should be encouraged to question whether the message sent and the message received are the same.

For homework (reflection assignment), each student must rank the designs from best to worst and offer a short rationale for their choices. Students must also address the questions, "What did I learn from this assignment," and "How has my perception of people with disabilities changed?" Last, two positive and two negative aspects of taking part in this activity must be identified. This is to be done (in written format) individually.

What To Do After The Activity

Because the discussion may seem like an attack of the work done, make comments as to what was done well by each group and encourage others to do the same.

Allow for class discussion and assign homework (reflection assignment).

Alternative Uses Or Extensions

Change the demographics of the assignment to address a different group. Some ideas include:

- Vietnam Veterans
- International Students (Campus Group)
- Prisoners of Conscience

Check the calendar during the term for additional ideas such as:

- African American History Month
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Change means by which the message is to be sent. Some ideas include:

- Billboard
- Coffee cup
- Button/pin
- Bumper sticker
- Tattoo
- Radio public service announcement
- Web page

Can be used to fulfill group element of the course.

T-shirt Assignment

Student Handout

Assignment

You will be assigned to a group. Together your group will be responsible for creating three T-shirt designs. The goal of the shirts is to promote disability awareness on campus.

Today, you will have 10-minutes in class to get started. Your first homework assignment is to do individual research so that you more completely understand the topic (disabilities). Each group member must have their research with them at our next session. A data check will be conducted during class to ensure all members are playing an active role in the process.

Our next session marks the last opportunity you will have to work in class on this project (20-minutes). You should start by revisiting Dewey's process. It is up to your group to decide when and where future meeting(s) will occur.

While all three designs will be collected and graded, your group must select one for presentation (on poster board) in class on _____. A typed explanation and rationale for each design will also be collected.

After the final presentations are complete, you will be given an individual reflection homework assignment. This reflection assignment will be due, at the start of class, on _____.

Presentation

Your group will present their final T-shirt design on poster board without verbal explanation. After doing so, the group must field questions from their classmates. A verbal explanation may be done at the close of the question and answer period.

Two additional designs should be on 8 1/2 by 11 (plain) white paper and will be collected by instructor.

Adapting Persuasive Appeals to Audience Values

Phil Dalton

Objectives

- To provide students, in a small group situation, the opportunity to apply audience adaptation principles to persuasive appeals.
- To make students aware of how standard and generic appeals tend to be mindlessly applied to audiences that vary widely with regard to values, attitudes, and interests.
- To give students an opportunity to evaluate appeals that relate directly to themselves, and to work together in an effort to adapt and improve those appeals based on their knowledge of their own shared values.

Approximate Time Required

40 minutes

Rationale

The rationale for this activity is derived from findings that suggest that people have a tendency to be mindless when communicating with others. Mindless communication is constituted by speaker assumptions of audience sameness or homogeneity. Assuming the audience is both similar to the speaker and to one another can be problematic, as it is very rare that all parties will share similar values and attitudes. Often, this can result in arguments consisting largely of stock appeals and generic expressions. Generic and poorly formulated arguments fail to demonstrate good will toward an audience and can result in either rejection of the argument, at best, and audience resentment, at the very worst.

What To Do Before Class

During this activity, several students will be asked to leave the room and work together devising 10 one sentence persuasive appeals. To prepare, the instructor needs to decide on the type of persuasive goal that the persuasive team will attempt to achieve. More specifically, the instructor should decide on what the persuaders will attempt to persuade the audience to do, choose, or think. For example, an instructor might choose to ask several members of social greek organizations to convince the audience to participate in Greek Rush, to purchase a Ford Escort, or to attend the Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans over Spring Break.