

02.2 Exploring Cultural Practices: The Informative Speech

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Objective

To provide students with a practical application for many of the public speaking skills taught in the basic course while advancing multicultural education.

Approximate Time Required

10-minutes of class instruction while introducing task and entertaining questions. Followed by 10-minutes of student generated discussion about the assignment. The number of full class sessions for student presentations and follow-up questions/discussion will vary according to how many students are in the class and the speaking time assigned by the instructor.

Materials Needed

Students:

Speaking notes as discussed in class

Instructor:

Assessment tool for presentations

Photo copies of assignment handout

Rationale

September 11, 2001 found many educators reexamining the role of multicultural education in the classroom. As Dunn points out (2002) the terrorists attacks and the aftermath highlighted the inability of many high school and college students to understand these events in broader geographic historical and political contexts. Assignments such as this are a good starting point for those looking to advance multicultural education in the basic communication classroom. This assignment allows students first hand exposure to the process of researching, writing, and presenting an informative speech while advancing multicultural education. I find, at first many

students are turned off by the idea of researching another culture. After topics are found and research begins, most students come to enjoy this assignment. I have been using one form or another of this assignment with great success for the past ten years. Students I have yet to find a class that did not enjoy the experience.

What To Do Before Class

Teach students the basic elements listed in the goals section of the student handout. Photocopy assignment handout. Create and photocopy assessment tool for presentation.

What to do when introducing this activity. Distribute “Exploring Cultural Practices” handout, review, and entertain questions. Read out loud assignment and be sure that students understand all elements, entertain questions, and schedule due dates for this assignment.

What To Do During Class

Encourage or require students to take notes during peer presentations. Note taking can focus on important aspects of the term. If notes are to be collected and graded, students could be asked to list things like; the main points as they understood them or they could be asked to identify things that they learned as a result of the speech.

Audience notes can provide great feedback to speakers. On paper, audience members could be asked to identify one thing that the speaker did especially well and also one area where the speaker might try to improve. For critical thinking, I like to ask the students to offer reasons why they think the student did well and examples of specific ways the student could try to improve. Consider collecting these comments to ensure audience members offer serious well thought ideas. Management suggestion: Have audience members make stacks of peer notes in the front of the room and bring a staple to class so you can staple all of the feedback together. So, all feedback of Jamie’s speech will be secured together and after faculty review it will be given to Jamie.

What To Do After Activity

Allow for class discussion. Ask students questions that allow them to critically analyze what they have learned as a result of experiencing this assignment both as speakers and listeners.

Sample questions:

What are the strengths of this assignment?

What are the weaknesses of this assignment?

What are the limitations of an assignment such as this?

What might one have learned about themselves as a result of this experience?

What might your audience members have gained from your speech?

How can this assignment be changed to make it better?

What conclusions can we draw as a result of our overall experiences with this assignment?

What surprised you most about this class assignment?

Appraisal

As in assessing any oral presentation the weight of the elements of work can vary. For example if organization is important at the point in the term when this assignment is used assessment should weigh heavy in the area of organization. Audience feedback/notes will offer assessment of student learning. Exam questions which require student reflection of learning can better measure student learning and allow the instructor to know if objectives were met. Such reflections should require critical thinking about skills learned or refined, personal knowledge gained, and understanding/application of course theory.

Alternative Uses Or Extensions

As a narrative study students could be sent into the community to collect stories about cultural practices first hand.

Post transcripts on your Department homepage.

Feature best student speeches in a department end-of-the-term speaking showcase.

Require a reference page that employs the APA style.

After teaching students how to evaluate internet resources, consider requiring internet resources for this assignment.

Could be limited to family practices and used in an interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, or family communication class.

References

Casimir, F. L. (1991). Introduction: Culture, communication, and education. *Communication Education*, 40, 229-234.

Dunn, R. (2001). Growing Good Citizens with a World-Centered Curriculum. *Educational Leadership*, 60, 10-15.

Wurzell, J. S., & Holt, W. (1991). Teaching arts for multicultural education. *Communication Education*, 40, 286-291.

Resources to help students find *topics*:

National Geographic Index

National Geographic magazine

Culturegrams*

Lands and Peoples (encyclopedia)*

Culture Shock! _____: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette (insert name of country in blank)*

Encyclopedias (include multimedia)

Discovery Channel

Travel Channel

International Student Affairs Office

Travel Magazines

Public Television

*Not available at all libraries

EXPLORING CULTURAL PRACTICES, AN INFORMATIVE SPEECH ASSIGNMENT

Task: Provide a practical opportunity to research and write an informative speech designed to uncover information about a cultural practice performed by the people of a foreign country.

Goals:

- Employ basic speech writing techniques.
- Understand how research is incorporated into speech writing.
- Recognize and use organizational patterns.
- Experience extemporaneous delivery.
- Reduce uncertainty concerning speech presentation.
- Apply public speaking guidelines to peer presentations.
- Employ visual aids while presenting information.
- Apply basic concepts of audience analysis.
- Conduct and incorporate library research.
- Improve skills necessary to publicly communicate more effectively.
- Motivate students to do research before making conclusions.
- Increase sensitivity to multiculturalism.

Assignment: Inform your audience about a cultural practice of a foreign country. Choose something done by the people of the country. This can be something done daily, yearly, once in a lifetime, etc. Select a topic that will be interesting to your audience.

Use this opportunity to learn more about an area of interest to you, celebrate your own heritage, revisit a country you were once in, or explore new and exciting horizons.

Topic: Your topic *is not* the name of a country. Your topic *is* a cultural practice done by a particular group of people who live in a foreign country.

Presentation: You will present your _____ minute informative speech in class on _____. Your presentation must have a complete introduction, body, and conclusion. Your speech will have two to five main points. For assistance, follow guidelines discussed in class regarding how to prepare and organize a speech.

You must use _____ sources outside of yourself during the speech. Each source must be quoted from at least _____ time(s) during your speech.

Delivery: This speech is to be presented using extemporaneous style. In doing so, you must carefully prepare and practice in advance and use only brief speaking notes during your speech.

You must use at least _____ speaking aid(s) during your speech. Be creative in selecting your speaking aid(s). Use class notes and/or text for guidelines and rules relating to the use of speaking aids.

Evaluation: Instructor will provide specifics regarding your grade.