



Internationalizing the Curriculum Project

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COM100 Introduction to Human Communication—3 Credits

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- Course Description: Theory and practice of communication skills in public, small group, and interpersonal settings. Includes study of the speech communication process.

Course includes eight modules incorporated into each of the five units covered over the course of the semester, as follows: communication processes incorporate perception; ethnocentrism and stereotyping of members of other cultures; interpersonal communication skills includes international practices; the influence of attitudes and values that pose barriers to communication; and differences with respect to gender expectations and behavior.

International Component Summary

International modules have been developed for each unit in the course, e.g., perceptions, ethnocentrism and stereotypes of other cultures (and in other cultures) are included in the communication process; international communication styles are included under interpersonal communication; and, international gestures, language differences, attitudes and values are included in sections of sending skills, nonverbal communication, paralanguage and methods of reduction.

Description of Material and How Integrated in Course

Materials are integrated into the course over the semester. The modules include printed materials assembled by the instructor, articles, videotapes, cartoons, examples of mis-ommunication, simulations, etc. Instructional/supplemental materials required include articles, videotapes, film, overheads, "East-West Game," cartoons, etc.

Special Assignments and Activities

Class discussion, group activities, simulations, role-playing, observations, class presentations, etc. Assessment is included in test, written work and class participation.

Tips/Suggestions to Instructor

The instructor states that using film is the most effective way to demonstrate cultural differences in communication—she will use more in the gurure. She also suggests having a social function that would incorporate foods and music from other cultures would add student interest.

COM100 INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN COMMUNICATION

Syllabus/Course Outline

- I. The Communication Process
 - A. Communication Models
 - B. Communication Settings
 - 1. Personal
 - 2. Small group
 - 3. Public speaking
 - C. Communication Functions
 - 1. Social
 - 2. Decision-making
 - D. Intrapersonal Communication
 - 1. Perception of self and others
 - International cultures
 - Stereotypes as identified by US
 - Stereotypes as identified by Foreigners
 - Ethnocentrism
 - 2. Self-concept
- II. Interpersonal Communication
 - A. Receiving Skills
 - 1. Listening
 - 2. Paraphrasing
 - 3. Questioning
 - 4. Interpreting
 - International interpersonal communication tendencies
 - Indirect vs. Direct
 - Word choice and placement
 - 5. Feedback
 - B. Sending Skills
 - 1. Separating fact from inference
 - 2. Referencing
 - C. Nonverbal Communication
 - 1. Environmental influence
 - 2. Body motions
 - International gestures
 - Differences/similarities
 - 3. Paralanguage

- D. Communication Barriers
 - 1. Types of barriers
 - International barriers
 - Language differences
 - World views
 - Individual vs. collective attitudes and values
 - Lack of knowledge of cultural norms
 - Ethnocentrism
 - 2. Methods of Reduction
- E. Understanding Communication Relationships
 - 1. Types of relationships
 - International differences with respect to gender expectations and behavior
 - 2. Applications
- F. Interviewing
 - 1. Types of questions
 - 2. Information-seeking interviews
 - 3. Employment interview

III. Small Group Communication

- A. Characteristics of Work Groups
 - 1. Types of groups
 - 2. Functions of groups
 - Identifying the influence of international group members
- B. Participation in Work Groups
 - 1. Organization
 - 2. Roles
 - US business meetings vs. foreign business meetings
 - 3. Evaluation
- C. Leadership in Groups
 - 1. Leadership styles
 - 2. Responsibilities
 - 3. Evaluation

IV. Public Speaking

- A. Speech Preparation
 - 1. Determining content
 - 2. Organizing material
 - 3. Adapting to the audience
 - Sensitivity to international cultural norms and methods of presentation
 - 4. Practicing the delivery
 - 5. Evaluation

B. Principles of Informative Speaking

1. Explaining
2. Describing
3. Defining
4. Using resources

International topics for informative speeches

C. Principles of Persuasive Speaking

1. Determining the objective
2. Persuasive approaches
3. Adaptation to audience
4. Convincing
5. Actuating
6. Refuting

D. Speeches for Special Occasions

1. Types of occasions
2. Applications

(Description of Modules Begins on Next Page)

COM100 INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN COMMUNICATION DESCRIPTION OF MODULES

Suggestions for international inserts for Perception

1. Identifying national and international influences on each student's speech:
Ask each student to think of his national heritage and to explain how his/her speech has been influenced -- maybe an accent, word choices, nonverbal accompaniments to speech, paralanguage, quiet vs. more verbal, etc.
2. Intentional stereotyping:
Ask the students in groups to stereotype a Mexican. Collect the information on the board. Ask them to watch the film "Emerging Markets, Mexico" and to see if their stereotypes match with the present day Mexicans in the film.

Suggestions for International Interpersonal Communication

1. An example for international communicative differences:
"An American invites a Filipino co-worker to dinner. The Filipino politely refuses. The American is hurt and feels that the Filipino does not want to be friendly. The Filipino is hurt and concludes that the invitation was not extended sincerely. Here, it seems, both the American and the Filipino assume that their customs for inviting people to dinner are the same when, in fact, they are not. A Filipino expects to be invited several times before accepting a dinner invitation. When an invitation is given only once it is viewed as insincere."
Devito, Joseph A., *Essentials of Human Communication*. 1996.
2. A film for examples of the different emblems used in many nationalities:
"A World of Gestures"
3. An exercise for students to recognize the difficulty of dealing with another language:
Ask the students to watch a foreign film (without subtitles) and have them discuss the difficulties, frustrations and resulting personal behaviors they had while watching the film.
4. An exercise for the students to understand the barriers of slang in international communication.
Show cartoon overheads of typical U.S. slang and expressions to illustrate miscommunication.
5. Examples of miscommunication due to literal translations errors:
"One dentist in Hong Kong apparently advertised, *Teeth extracted by the latest Methodists*. A more startling sign, however, showed up in the window of a tailor in Jordan. The sign advised the following: *Order you summer suit. Because if big rush we will execute customers in strict rotation*.
Business people in Mexico City reported that a hotel there proclaimed, *The manager has personally passed all the water served here*. Others report a Moscow hotel sign that read, *If this is your first visit to the USSR, you are welcome to it*. A Swiss restaurant boasted, *Our wines leave you nothing to hope for*.
A firm in the Middle East was able to attract attention, but not exactly the kind for which it had hoped. It seems that a Saudi Arabian laundry had posted, in English, a list of its cleaning prices. It was not its prices, though, that were attracting people. The company had used a poor translator, and among the many spelling errors on the poster was the omission of the letter r in 'lady's shirt.' One can imagine the customers' reactions. Another laundry, this time a hotel laundry in Tokyo, experienced a similarly embarrassing situation. The hotel's instructions, translated into English, stated, *The flattening of underwear with pressure is the job of the chambermaid. To get it done, turn her on*.

Kentucky Fried Chicken ...made a mistake when KFC used the phrase, *finger lickin' good* in Chinese. It translated to "eat your fingers off." The Otis Engineering Corporation, when participating in an exhibition held in Moscow, could not understand why the Soviets were snickering. They were disappointed and embarrassed when they discovered that a careless translator had rendered a song that identified "completion equipment" as "Equipment for orgasms."

Blunders in international Business. by David A. Ricks

6. An exercise for students to begin to recognize that there are different world views and their own ethnocentricity:
Ask the students to rank different countries in order of the strongest, richest, happiest, and most progressive. Then ask them to consider different definitions of those terms and then rank the countries again. Use a variety of countries, such as the U.S.A., Kenya, France, India, Japan, Saudi Arabia, etc.
7. An exercise for students to understand problems associated with a lack of knowledge of cultural norms:
Ask the students to role play gift giving with other cultures. Use Chapter 3 in *Do's and Taboos around the World* by Roger E. Axtell, as a reference.
8. An example for students to recognize international differences exist with gender expectations and behavior:
Read the following to the students and ask them to identify gender expectations they realize are different from their own expectations. From: Lord, E. (1965). Examples of cross-cultural problems encountered by Americans working overseas: An instructors handbook. Alexandria, VA: Human Resources Research Organization.

The school day ended. Tired Miss Larson took her classroom problems home with her and shared her concerns with friends at an informal cocktail party and her frustration over teaching English in the Ethiopian government school. "For three years, I've tried to get those dear little girls to behave like normal human beings, to have some pride, to hold up their heads, look me in the face, and answer a question in a voice I can hear without straining. They're so bright; they learn as fast as the children back home, but they're hopeless, absolutely hopeless. They just can't seem to learn to behave with human dignity. For all the good I've done here, I might as well have stayed home in Iowa and continued to teach there."

The school day ended. Kebedetch walked stiffly home. The strange steel she had forced into her neck muscles seemed to have spread throughout her body. She felt rigid, brave and frightened. Entering the gojo (small house or hut), Kebedetch was greeted warmly. Father asked the usual, daily question: "What did you learn today?" Kebedetch threw back her head, looked he father in the eye, and proclaimed in a loud, clear voice, "Ethiopia is composed of twelve provinces plus the Federated State of Eritrea. . ."

Momma and Poppa talked late that night. What had happened to Kebedetch? She was no longer behaving as a normal human being.

"Did you notice how she threw back her head like a man?" asked Poppa. "What has happened to her shyness as a woman?"

"And her voice," added Momma. "How happy I am that our parents were not present to hear a daughter of ours speak with the voice of a foreigner."

"She showed no modesty; she seemed to feel no pride. If she were normal, she would be ashamed to raise her head like that, being a girl-child, and to speak so loud as that," Poppa added with a deep sigh.

"Kebedetch has learned so much," said Momma. "She knows more than I, and this has given me great joy. But if her learnings are making of her a strange, ungentle, beast-like person, I do not want her to learn more; she is my only daughter."

"Poppa pondered. Finally he shook his head and spoke. You are right, Mebrat, our daughter must not return to school. The new education is not good, but only the strongest can survive. I had hoped Kebedetch could learn and remain normal and gentle, could become a woman of dignity. The frightening behavior of hers tonight has convinced me. She has lost her sense of pride, lost her sense of shame, lost her dignity. She must never return to the school. We shall try to help her find herself again."

Suggestions for Internationalizing Small Group Communication

An exercise for students to recognize some need to understand cultural differences in business meetings and negotiations:

The East - West Game *Communication Between Cultures*, by Stefani, Samovar, and Skow

Split the class in half and give each side their instructions and set a reason for them to come together for a business meeting.

Instructions for the East:

"Your group represents an ancient Eastern culture that although poor, is very proud of its long history and heritage. You have a highly treasured artifact that dates to 400 A.D. It is the national treasure and culturally you cannot give it up. (You may wish to identify a single behavior demonstrated by the west that will win them the artifact).

What complicates these negotiations is that you come from a culture that is very agreeable, polite, and always seeks to answer in the affirmative whether you mean "yes" or not. You never state anything as flatly negative during negotiation sessions. You never tell your opposing team that they will never get the artifact. Sometimes you may stop the negotiations to talk amongst yourselves. You always seem to agree and go along with the other team because offending another party might result in the other losing face.

You do not use strong, direct eye contact. You occasionally look them in the eye but never for prolonged periods of time, not with any degree of intensity. Using meditation is common in your culture. For example, although the Chief Spokesman may do a lot of the talking he will very often ask his team members what they think. He will often allow other members to speak and carry on the negotiations with the other side.

Before meeting the other team, look at the following list of roles and cultural traits. Decide who will have each role, adopt the cultural traits that govern your culture, and choose an approach you will take in the negotiations.

Roles:

- Chief Spokesperson
- Minister of Education and Culture
- Security Officer
- Political Officer
- Protocol Officer
- Information Officer
- Recorder (to list all the assumptions, values, etc., of other side)
- Time Keeper (to keep each phase exactly on schedule)

Group Organizational Director (GOD, the overall organizer of the East team)
Most Honored Grandmother
Spokesperson (most honored)
Advisors (all others)

Cultural Traits:

'We': the group is most highly valued, not the individual. Individual always in social role. Cannot do anything to conflict with group.

Form: Outward form is most important. Manners extremely important, must participate in activities considered important by group, even if one disagrees.

Nature: Conformity to the rules of nature is best.

Progress: Change is both negative and positive. Technical change necessary, social change bad.

Efficiency: Considered less important than higher values such as form, saving face, conformity to custom.

Time: Not precisely measured, not primary consideration. Present, not future, given priority.

Humility: Related to one's rank. One must always defer to one of higher social rank, must always try to appear humble.

Money: Saving for the sake of saving is seldom considered a virtue. Price is regarded as an index of quality.

Age: Great reverence for age. Age means wisdom and certain privileges. Honorific titles are always used when addressing an elder. Person of higher rank must attempt to defer to and honor specific inferiors.

Education: Highly valued. Means of raising family status.

Authority: Obedience to authority, individual rights mean little.

Moral superiority: A moral smugness that stems from a conviction that East people are a special people with values and conditions that make them unique.

Instructions for the West:

Your group represents a Western culture that is rich and powerful. There is a highly coveted artifact in the possession of the East that is a highly valued part the artifact. Your national museum and your government have strongly urged you to get the artifact at any cost. Money is no problem. You cannot come out and say that you will get the artifact at any cost because the East is world renowned as a culture of shrewd traders. But you believe that every person has his/her price.

Culturally, you feel it is important to try to figure out the strategies acceptable to the other side so that you can enter and progress through the negotiations smoothly. But you should always try to stay within the cultural traits listed below. You are success oriented, hard working, efficient, and future oriented, and you use time productively. You like to move things along.

Before meeting the other team, look at the following list of roles and cultural traits. Decide who will have each role, adopt the cultural traits that govern your culture.