

CULTURAL COMMUNICATION



OVERVIEW

Teaching and modeling communication is a key competency developed in virtual exchange. In this lesson, students explore various communication styles and how cultural backgrounds influence communication. This is an interactive exercise for students to experience what it is like to communicate with someone who doesn't have the same communication style or norms.



GLOBAL COMPETENCE

Engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions across cultures.



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES

Relationship skills: The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.

Social awareness: The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.



TIME

30 minutes



ACTIVITY TYPE

Discussion, role-play



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will gain a better understanding of different cultural practices, values, and perspectives.
- Students will develop effective communication skills, including active listening, verbal, and non-verbal communication.
- Students will reflect on their own cultural identity and how it influences their interactions.



MATERIALS NEEDED

Printed Rule Cards - Enough for each student to be assigned a rule

Preparation

Set up the classroom in a way that allows students to walk around and create small groups



BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Review different cultural communication styles:

<https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/assets/pdfs/resource-library/communication-styles.pdf>



DIRECTIONS

Introduction

- Briefly discuss the importance of cultural awareness and the benefits of understanding different cultures.
- Explain that culture plays a role in the way that we interact and communicate. Around the world, there are different norms that people follow when communicating and they differ from country to country.
- In virtual exchange, it is important to understand that each culture has a different style and cultural norms for communication. It's important to reflect on that during your interactions.

Activity

Share with the students that they will be participating in an activity that is focused on communication. Each student will be given a piece of paper with one rule on it. They are to follow this rule for the entirety of the activity but no one else should know what their rule is. If someone violates your rule, you should raise a finger to let them know they have violated your rule and then continue the conversation.

- Pass out one to each student.
- Set a timer for 5 - 10 minutes and allow students to walk around the room and talk with each other. If it is helpful, you can give the students a prompt to discuss. They should talk to multiple people during this time.
- When the timer goes off, bring the class back together as a group.

Group Discussion

Ask the following questions to debrief the activity:

- How did you feel when participating in this activity?
- How did it feel to break someone else's rule? How did this change the way you continued to interact?
- How can understanding cultural differences improve our interactions in real life?
- What strategies can we use to be more culturally sensitive and aware in our interactions?
- How can this relate to your interactions with peers during the virtual exchange?

Students should leave the conversation understanding that culture impacts the way people communicate and appreciate how their communication style and preferences may differ from others. We may not always know the norms of another culture and it's important to reflect before making judgments or assumptions.