The Purdue University Passport to Intercultural Learning (PUPIL)

Assignment to complete towards obtaining an *Intercultural Verbal and Nonverbal Communication* or an *Intercultural Curiosity* badge.

This assignment takes the form of a 4-part project and is designed to facilitate reflection upon differences between intercultural verbal and nonverbal communication as well as to learn about different cultures by asking questions related to music.

Many of these assignments have multiple parts or projects, designed to be completed in order. *It is a good idea to read through all parts or projects of each assignment as one part or project may be dependent on another.*

**Assignment Two: Surface Culture – Language and Music**

**Project Part One – The Interview and Observation**

If your first or native language is not English, select a research buddy whose first or native language IS English. If your first or native language is English, select a research buddy whose first or native language is NOT English. (For example: select a student taking ENG 106 or an international student taking ENG 106i). After you have each selected one of your favorite songs from your childhood and have obtained the lyrics and music video, interview your partner for no more than 30 minutes about his/her song choice. Here is what you will want to do:

1) Secure a recording device to record the interview. Use a device that will create a digital file you can share.
2) Make sure you have a pen and paper or something with which to take notes.
3) Identify one of your favorite songs from childhood. Obtain the lyrics for the song. If possible, obtain, via YouTube or something like it, the music video that goes with the song.
4) Make sure to bring a device to the interview with which you can access the internet and or play a CD/DVD or mp3.
5) Use the following set of questions as a potential structure for the interview.
   a. What song did you choose? Please read the lyrics to me in your native language. (While your research buddy is reading the song lyrics, observe his/her voice and observe his/her nonverbal communication or body language as he or she reads the lyrics. Take notes of what you observe.)
   b. What is it about this song that made/makes you like it so much? Describe some of the particular childhood memories this song brings to mind.
   c. Let’s listen to this song together and watch the video. (If no music video is available, play the song on whatever device you have brought with you to the interview. As the song is playing, take note of the prominent instruments you hear throughout the song. If a video is available, pay close attention to what is going on in the video including any nonverbal communication. Take notes and draft a few questions for your buddy about what you observed – particularly if you notice anything that may be culturally specific or different than what you typically see in music videos in your native country.)
d. Ask your research buddy the questions that emerged from your listening to the song and/or from watching the video. (For example, if you hear an instrument in the song but you cannot seem to identify it, ask your buddy what the instrument is and about its significance in his/her culture. Or if you hear an acoustic guitar, or a harp, or an organ, do the same – ask about its significance in his/her culture. Perhaps the music video highlights youth playing a particular game, ask your buddy about the game and its cultural significance.)

6) Thank your buddy for his/her time.
7) Schedule another time slot for your buddy to interview you and to repeat the previous six steps with you being the interviewee the next time.
8) In between times, you will want to complete Project Part Two.

**Project Part Two – Transcribing the Interview**

Now that you have conducted the interview and brief observation, transcribe the interview. Transcribing involves taking the recorded interview and typing every spoken word you and your research buddy said. As an option, if you play back your recording via Windows Media Player, you can slow down the playback speed by: 1) right-clicking on the Windows Media Player screen, 2) select, “Enhancements,” 3) click “Play speed settings,” and 4) select a speed that you find helpful. Sometimes slowing down the speed helps with this process. Only transcribe 30 minutes of your interview. Be prepared for this process to take up to 5 hours. Create a process that works best for you. Many individuals find it helpful to structure the transcriptions like this:

SVEINN: So, Pete, what song did you bring today?

PETE: Uhh, I brought “Drops of Jupiter” by a group called Train.

SVEINN: Cool. Can you read the lyrics out loud in English?

PETE: Sure, um okay, here we go, um…”Now that she’s back in the atmosphere…”

**Project Part Three – Analyzing the Transcript**

Transcribing an interview can be an eye-opening experience – an opportunity to learn something about both you and the interviewee. Read through the interview transcript once just to get a sense of the whole conversation. Read through the transcript a second time, this time take notes of your impressions as you read. For example, perhaps as you read the transcript you remember the actual conversation and also remember the interviewee’s facial expressions as s/he spoke at that particular time – maybe the impression that you get is that the interviewee was embarrassed at that moment and had a hard time expressing how s/he felt. Make note of that impression. These impressions are your interpretations of the interview – how you make sense of what was said. Be sure to capture those impressions and interpretations by highlighting them and writing them down. If you encounter a particular impression
more than once, maybe highlighting all similar impressions with the same color will be helpful for you. Re-read the transcript as many times as you think necessary to uncover and identify your impressions and interpretations of the interview.

The next step is to read through your impressions to identify any salient interpretations. In other words, since this project is focused on intercultural learning and differences in verbal and nonverbal communication, identify your impressions that relate to culture and verbal and non-verbal communication. Pull them out of the text by cutting and pasting them into a separate document. Read through these impressions again. What do they suggest about your interviewee’s culture? What do they suggest about your interviewee’s verbal and non-verbal communication? Schedule time to meet with your interviewee to share each other’s impressions and interpretations from the respective interviews.

Project Part Four – Reflecting on the Project

Write a reflection of this interview project that addresses the following questions.

1) What did you learn about yourself during this process in terms of how you view cultural differences related to verbal and non-verbal communication?

2) What did you learn about your interviewee’s culture-specific verbal and non-verbal communication?

3) Describe the feelings you felt, the overall dynamic, and the greatest take-away from the conversation you had with your interview in which the two of you compared your interview impressions and interpretations.

1) What questions do you have about your interviewee’s culture and to what degree do you think this interview project which focused on music has given you access to another culture?