INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION INVESTIGATION

by Christina Kalinic

Syllabus link:

Social and cultural research methods

- Research methods - qualitative
    - Secondary research

Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the nature of communication through a study of:

- how culture determines the ways individuals encode messages, what mediums they choose for transmitting them, and the ways messages are interpreted
- verbal and non-verbal communication

Syllabus outcome:

P7 selects, organises and considers information from a variety of sources for usefulness, validity and bias

Learning Intention:

To investigate how culture shapes the way people communicate across societies. Students will use secondary research to understand similarities and differences and create a digital guidebook that helps Australian exchange students communicate effectively and respectfully.

Success Criteria:

By the end of this teaching and learning activity, students will be able to:

- Identify and explain four key cultural features of their chosen country and explain why these are relevant for exchange students.
- Compare cultural features with Australian society using clear graphic organisers, such as a Venn diagram.
- Describe examples of verbal and non-verbal communication typical of the chosen culture.
- Identify potential intercultural misunderstandings and explain why they may occur.
- Suggest three realistic strategies to prevent or address misunderstandings.
- Use at least five reliable secondary sources from two different media types, citing them correctly.
- Critically evaluate sources for usefulness, bias, reliability, and validity in an annotated reference list.
- Present findings in a clear, visually engaging digital format suitable for the intended audience.

The *Intercultural Communication Investigation* is a rich blend of *assessment for learning* and *assessment of learning*. As students work collaboratively to produce a digital guidebook for Australian exchange students, teachers gain valuable insight into how they research, interpret cultural information, and evaluate the quality of sources- this allows for formative feedback that supports growth in real time.

What makes this task so effective is that it gives students a purpose beyond the classroom. Students are producing something that could genuinely assist someone navigating a new culture. This real-world focus fosters ownership and engagement, encouraging deeper application of concepts such as cultural relativism. The completed guidebook then becomes a powerful *assessment of learning*, showcasing each student's ability to think critically, synthesise information, and communicate findings with intercultural sensitivity.

Additionally, the investigation serves as an excellent foundation for the Personal Interest Project (PIP). It reinforces the core skills of evaluating sources for bias, usefulness, and reliability, while modelling how to link research with the real-world.

Intercultural Communication Investigation

World Education Program Australia (WEP) has asked Year 11 Society and Culture students in small groups of 2-3, to prepare a digital guidebook for an upcoming student exchange program.

As a group, you are to select **ONE overseas country** (avoid western countries that you are familiar with- e.g., the UK and USA) and design a digital guidebook to assist Australian students preparing for their visit to your chosen overseas country.

Choose a country from the SBS Culture Atlas at: https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/countries

Your guidebook must be **aesthetically pleasing** for Australian exchange students and completed using a digital platform of your choice- e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi, Canva, etc.

Your guidebook should consist of:

- A **description** of **four (4) main features** of the **society and culture** of the country that you feel are **MOST** relevant to assist exchange students. You must go on to **explain** why each feature is **relevant** to assisting students on exchange.

  You may consider some of the following: *beliefs, customs, cultural celebrations, family, gender roles, religion, education, rites of passage, political systems, etc.*

- **Identify** and **explain** the aspects of **society and culture** that you feel are **similar and/or different** to **Australia**. [Suggestion: Venn diagram]
- **Identify** key elements of **verbal and non-verbal communication** typical to your chosen country.
- **Describe** and **explain** possible **intercultural misunderstandings** that could eventuate during a student's exchange.
- **Outline** and **assess three (3) suggested strategies** that could be used to either **prevent** or **address** these **cultural misunderstandings**.
- Uses **in-text citations** throughout the guidebook *(at least FIVE different secondary sources from at least TWO different mediums)*.

Include an annotated reference list- *usefulness, bias, reliability, validity.*