ENRICHING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

CRITICAL REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

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“Critically reflexive practice embraces subjective understandings of reality as a basis for thinking more critically about the impact of our assumptions, values, and actions on others” (Cunliffe, 2004).
Traditional Learning

- Social reality is objective.
- Uses “Banking Approach”
  - We learn techniques, principles & models that can be applied to individual actions and situations.
  - Puts knowledge into “separate accounts.”
- Focus is on repetition, application.

Critical Reflexivity

- Transforms reality by thinking subjectively about the impact of your actions and interactions with others.
  - Equates learning with moments in which we are “struck.”
- Focus is on Praxis – questioning our own assumptions and exploring others.
Reflex – an action that is performed as a response to a stimulus and without conscious thought

Consider our immediate...
  Response
  Impression
  Reacting-in-the-moment dialogue

Reflex draws upon...
  Knowledge/experience
  Instinct/habit/memory
By thinking more critically about personal assumptions and actions, we can develop more collaborative, responsive, and ethical ways of communicating and engaging.

In examining these assumptions, we can:

- Uncover our limitations and possibilities
- Become less prone to accepting the status quo/traditions
- Develop a greater awareness of different perspectives and possibilities, and of the need to transform old ways of theorizing & managing
Course Title:
Cultural Engagement and Professional Development in Agricultural Communication: A Service-Learning Program in Romania

Objectives:
• To learn about and apply methods of cross-cultural message development and co-construction of participant narratives
• To enhance personal listening skills
• To develop working understanding of Heifer International and Heifer Romania
Hands-on learning as it relates to:

- Personal responsibility as a communicator
- Potential consequences of personal culture
- Practices of engagement with the unfamiliar
Variable style of Interviewing

- Contains elements of:
  - Autoethnography
  - Narrative inquiry
  - Photovoice
- Identifies the Entry Point to:
  - Consider self
  - Authentically engage with others
  - Responsibly represent others

Doloriet & Sambrook (2009)
Enabling Poverty Through Aid

“I enjoyed giving the children milk and helping them because they are so adorable, but at the same time I felt like I was contributing to helping people be homeless… I know that what Heifer is doing there is great, but I hate that those people have no intention of making a better life for themselves…”
Voicing Disagreement on Defining “Poor”

“A lot of the [students] were saying that they were disappointed in the program because the families we have been staying with are not as poor as we expected… They started suggesting that [Heifer International] is unethical… At the end I told them what I was thinking: In my opinion, they were being very judgmental where they didn’t have a right to be. We don’t know all the facts. Our family in Rasca had told us that they were just breaking even financially. It was obvious to me that people are benefitting from this program. We have no right to judge how much these families were and are struggling. None. Suffering can’t be quantified, happiness can’t be quantified. The only thing I am comfortable judging in this situation is the quality of the people. Honesty, compassion, work ethic, etc. These are good people, I can tell that.”
The Group Dialogue is Critical

• Talking it out vs. Writing it out
• Further examination of similar “struck by” moments
CRITICAL REFLEXIVE ANALYSIS

LIMITATIONS

• Struggling to go down deep
• Students who struggle to write it out
• Limited time to analyze journals
OTHER TOOLS TO CONSIDER

PHOTOVOICE

VISUAL DISCOVERY KITS

