Open Educational Resources   Kingsborough Community College

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ANT-37 Open Assignments

Jill L. Siegel
CUNY Kingsborough Community College

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

The following activities use open educational practices to engage students in active and shared learning. The first section discusses a model for creating a more open syllabus, the second section is an assignment where students create a collaborative bulletin board, and the third section is an activity where students first create presentations that are added to an online "video text." All of these activities are buildable, and can be shared with new classes over time, building a larger repository of class materials that are based on students' active participation and authoritative knowledge. While these are intended for an Introductory class in Anthropology, they can be adapted for a variety of disciplines in the social sciences and humanities.

Opening Up the Syllabus

Overview

Opening up the syllabus allows for students to find meaningful materials that acknowledge their own experiences, goals and interests, recognizing the fact that our students are adults who are never blank slates. But, it's hard to create a syllabus collaboratively, and setting up the processes and procedures to facilitate that type of collaboration takes time and is really a semester long project in itself. By creating differentiated learning opportunities as we move through the semester, and having a grading system that helps make the choice in learning and material explicit, the class constructs the syllabus in a way that supports further open practices and assignments without being overwhelming for either myself or the class.

Progression

Grades are important for students, and a clear grading policy was the first step. Instead of students having mandatory assignments that received a grade, which is then averaged along with all of their other assignments for their total semester grade, there is a very simple point system that is additive. Each assignment or activity is worth a set number of points, the points received are added up and directly translate to the end of semester grade.

This allows for a wide variety of readings. The activities that students do with the readings follow a standard format, but the readings are differentiated. Choices are provided based on topics they expressed interest in. I created a class wiki where students write summaries and responses on the topics that weren't assigned to the whole class.

For an introductory course to a broad discipline, the idea of choice in the readings is an instructional tactic in and of itself. As students look through their options, they're exposed to the breadth of subject matter that is covered, which is always a struggle when deciding what to focus on when narrowing down a reading list.

Regular meetings with me help guide their exploration and gives me ideas for topics to provide. The midterm and final are both portfolio based projects, where again, students choose what topics or artifacts specifically they want to apply the course material to.

As this progresses students are encouraged to suggest documentaries or videos that they think relate to class or would be helpful to other students.They add these to a collaborative playlist that is shared among the class and is provided to future students as well.

Finally, at the end of the semester students are asked to choose a reading or video that they think would be useful for future students in this class. They write a justification that provides an overview of the material and discusses its relevance and connections to other material covered in class. With their permission, this material is added to the syllabus for future semesters.

The What's Good Board

Overview

One challenge with having students create ancillary materials that incorporate their own experiences, like case studies, can be encouraging students to move away from an analysis that is solely personal and towards a more scholarly and academic examination of events and phenomena. This activity helps students reflect on their own subjective experiences through a more academic lens, and begins to ask students to think reflexively about their own positionality and relationship to larger world events, while still acknowledging the importance of subjective experiences. Instructor and peer feedback can be particularly useful in highlighting connections to relevant theories, themes, and paradigms, and provide a scaffolding to support activities that ask students to critically examine course topics using higher level critical thinking skills.

This activity is designed for an online asynchronous course context and uses an online bulletin board platform www.padlet.com , but could also be done using a shared slide show, or synchronously or in person as a class discussion. It follows an introduction to

the major perspectives and methods in Anthropology, and begins with a review of relevant concepts from the previous class.

Assignment

CULTURE AND ANTHROPOLOGY

One of my anthropology professors used to say that culture isn't an event or an object, those are just things. We can see culture in the conversations we have about those objects or events. When something like what happened this week in DC occurs, we can't stop at the event itself; cultural anthropologists look at the conversations around the event, how people understand what happened, the questions they ask (or don't), what they think is important, and who they talk to. As anthropologists, we pay attention to how events are given meanings and by whom, and how those meanings are created, accepted, and contested. The What's Good Bulletin Board let's us practice doing that with our own experiences.

WHAT IS THIS?

The landing page for our Blackboard site probably looks different than what you've seen before. It is a bulletin board. You can post, comment, share, rate and tag. Look at the bottom of this assignment for instructions on how to access the rest of our Blackboard page.

There are a lot of things happening in the news right now, both in the world, and your own lives. You can talk about any of them in any way you want on your slides or posts. And you can change and edit your work, and add new slides or posts throughout the semester. Just make sure you always include your name somewhere if you want credit for your work (you can definitely choose to remain anonymous).

WHAT DO YOU POST?

The focus is thinking through these prompts in any form you want (pictures, writing, spoken word, a tiktok dance). Check out the posts that are already up for examples.

1. NEWS: What's in your news? What's happening that you care about right now?
2. REACTIONS THOUGHTS QUESTIONS FEELINGS: What are your thoughts, feelings or reactions?
3. IDENTITY: What aspects of your identity are carrying those feelings?
4. AGENCY ACTION AND POWER: What's actions can you take, did you take, or might you take? What's in your control and/or power?

HOW TO POST ON THE WHAT'S GOOD BULLETIN BOARD

Use the link at the top of the menu bar to get to the What's Good Board. If you click on the board, a little plus sign pops up in the bottom right. Click on it. That's how you add things.

HOW TO GET BACK TO BLACKBOARD
Look for the little square in the upper left hand corner of your screen and then click on the menu that pops up

Collaborative Video Text

Overview

In this activity, students create digital presentations that provide ancillary support for main OER text used in the class. These presentations are recorded, and with permission, later compiled into a "video text." There are different ways this compilation could be organized, but I've found success with using Youtube playlists, which have the options of being collaborative, shared, updated or remixed. Uploading the videos to youtube before compiling them also allows students to set permissions and controls for who has access to their work and how public they want to be without significantly impacting the compilation as whole

Assignment

Each presentation is aligned with a chapter from the OER text that we use, and focuses on a specific topic or section within a larger chapter. The chapters are assigned, but students can choose what topic or section they'd like to focus on.

After being assigned a chapter the textbook, students work either individually or in groups to pick a topic that is covered in that chapter, give relevant context, define and explain the important terms, concepts and vocabulary words, find an ethnographic example in the form of a video clip or short documentary that allows them to apply the ideas from the text to a new context, and includes 3-4 questions for class discussion

Students create the presentation using google slides, a suggested standard outline or template can be helpful. In a remote learning context, students can present their work alone, and create a video of themselves presenting and discussing the material. They can present to the instructor synchronously and that session can be recorded. In a synchronous class students can present to the class, and that session can be recorded.

The presentation (in either video or slide form) is then uploaded to the larger body of work, organized thematically, which comprises the ancillary online text. I've found uploading videos to a youtube playlist works well and is easy to navigate and access for students.

This allows students to not only generate the material and applications that are meaningful and relevant, but also gives a variety of modalities in which students can access class content.

When the recordings are of a live presentation, there is an interactive element that allows for questions and clarification, as well as thinking more deeply and reflecting on material, that students studying asynchronously online might not be accessing on their own.

Presentation Rubric

Criteria	Point Value	
	Competency Demonstrated	Competency Not Demonstrated
Virtual Presentation of Project at the scheduled time	2	0
Addresses at least one topic from the specific reading assigned	4	0
Identifies relevant information and concepts	4	0
Relates concepts or material to previous concepts or topics	2	0
Provides at least 1 video that serves as an ethnographic example and connects with the chosen topic	4	0
Includes at least one question per group member for class discussion	4	0