Students will become aware of the career-readiness competency Global/Intercultural Fluency and connect this competency and the skills associated with it to the assignment topic.

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

PLEASE READ/COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

1. Learning Outcome
2. Objective
3. Global/Intercultural Fluency Defined
4. Exercise 1:
   Key Concepts and Important Information.
5. Exercise 2:
   a. The “Lost Boys”
   b. Class Discussion
6. Exercise 3:
   Cultural Comparisons

1. LEARNING OUTCOME

The following exercises are designed to help you identify your global and intercultural fluency skills and put them into practice. As you move through them, reflect on what you believe are your most significant strengths and weaknesses when it comes to thinking and acting globally.

3. GLOBAL/INTERCULTURAL FLUENCY DEFINED

We buy and wear clothing that has been produced in factories overseas. Our morning cup of coffee may have its origins in the fields of Central America. When we obtain technical assistance over the phone, we may be speaking to someone in a remote country. In certain industries, it is not uncommon to spend a couple of days each week in foreign countries connecting with colleagues who work in international “sister” offices.

Global fluency involves an awareness of global interconnectedness and its consequences for our lives as students, workers, neighbors, and citizens (Inoue, 2007). If we are globally fluent, we have the ability – or we desire the ability - to understand globalization and its effects on our lives and the lives of those around us.
4. EXERCIZE ONE

Familiarize yourself with the Following Information About Global and Intercultural Fluency

Due to the increased likelihood of cross-cultural contacts – either in our native country or because of international travel – there is a greater chance for misunderstanding and miscommunication today than in the past. It is important to possess a certain degree of cultural skill, one might say.

Being fluent inter-culturally involves a general sense that cultures can vary - sometimes a little and sometimes a lot - from one another. It is about valuing cultural difference and being motivated to understand and appreciate such differences.

**Ethnocentrism:** Ethnocentrism involves measuring another culture by standards of one’s own culture. If we compare the characteristics of another culture against those of our own, we typically arrive at a negative evaluation of the other culture. This is because our own culture, and its characteristics, come to feel normal and “natural” to us, even though they are learned.

**Cultural Relativism:** The ability to view aspects of a culture within, and based upon, its own context. In other words, having a culturally relative point of view means that we do not view or judge another culture by standards of our own. Rather, we evaluate a culture on its own terms.

**Enculturation:** The process of long-term exposure to a culture which often results in the belief that the ways of one’s native culture are right or natural. Enculturation involves significant immersion into a particular culture. As we grow and thrive (often) in a single culture, the ways of that culture become embedded in our thinking.

See Herskovits, 1948
Characteristics and Barriers

Characteristics of Globally and Inter-culturally Fluent Communicators (Inoue, 2007)

- Tolerance of ambiguity
- Ability to adapt and be flexible in behavior and viewpoint
- Ability and willingness to gather new knowledge in unfamiliar situations
- Communicative sensitivity: Ability to modify one’s communication patterns in response to others around them
- Respect for differing experiences and points of view

Inoue (2007) identified six barriers or “stumbling blocks” to effective inter-cultural communication. These are:

- Assumption of similarities
- Lack of knowledge about language differences in both word & context
- Lack of knowledge about variant non-verbal communication and cues
- Inability to set aside preconceptions and stereotypes
- Tendency to quickly judge and evaluate
- Anxiety about and distrust of other cultures

5. EXERCISE TWO: GLOBAL FLUENCY

a. Watch this short video from National Geographic about the “Lost Boys.”
https://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/movies/00000144-0a41-d3cb-a96c-7b4ddb450000

b. Questions for discussion

What taken-for-granted aspects of American culture are met with confusion by the Sudanese men?

What aspects of their experience of culture shock were the most interesting (or surprising) to you?

What aspects of their interactions with Americans had the greatest potential for miscommunication or misunderstanding? What obstacles or “stumbling blocks” were encountered?

If you met them, how might you counter the effects of your own enculturation?
Multiculturalism and Intercultural Fluency

We often hear the word “multicultural,” but what does it mean? Although understandings of “multiculturalism” can vary, three components form the basis of this concept. They are:

**Diversity of populations**: this diversity can include — race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religious preference, social class, disability, and other dimensions.

**Analytical paradigms of power**, privilege, and oppression.

**Social change**, specifically the need to acknowledge change and to be somewhat flexible in adapting to it.

Being culturally unaware or non-fluent can lead to cultural destructiveness. *Assumptions of similarity and/or an inability to relinquish stereotypical thinking can lead to strained interactions with others.* An inability to navigate global social networks can make us less effective in our personal and professional circles.

Questions for small group discussion

As a group, review chart below — “Comparing Aspects of Culture” (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1994). The chart presents several dimensions of culture. Each dimension is shown in terms of its presentation in mainstream American culture as compared to that of other cultures.

1. Which cultural distinctions are the most surprising to you?
2. Discuss when and where you have encountered cultural differences. How or when did you realize there was a difference? How did you handle it?
3. Have you experienced subcultural variation? For example, if you are from the South what differences — if any — have you observed in other regions of the country?
4. What is your experience with cultural diversity which extends beyond race, ethnicity, and nationality? Do you have experience with gender or sexual diversity? With religious diversity? Do you have experience with disability/ability as a form of diversity?
5. Share a personal experience of culture shock.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Culture</th>
<th>American Culture</th>
<th>Other Cultures</th>
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| Sense of self and space; introductions and body language | Informal: handshake  
Personal space: wide, a lot preferred | Formal: bows  
Personal space: narrow; physical proximity to others may be very small |
| Eye contact                               | Important, but brief; not to be extended                                          | Varies; could be prolonged or non-existent; culture may discourage making eye contact; may depend on social status |
| Communication, language                   | Explicit, direct, emphasis on content                                             | Implicit, indirect, emphasis on context                                        |
| Dress & appearance                        | Wide range in accepted dress; less formality today; more flexibility, especially for the genders | Dress may indicate wealth, position, or have religious significance           |
| Food, eating habits                        | Eating as necessity; rushed; fit it in as needed; eat “on the go”               | Dining as social, familial, or religious experience; eating to be enjoyed, savored |
| Relationships, family, friends; age as status | Focus on nuclear family; value on youth                                        | Focus on extended family; age given status & respect                           |
| Values and norms                           | Individual orientation; self-reliance valued                                      | Group orientation; community cohesion valued                                  |
| Dominant beliefs, attitudes               | Moving toward egalitarian; authority to be challenged; individuals seek to control their destiny/outcome | Explicitly patriarchal; respect for authority and the social order; individuals accept their fate |
| Mental processes, learning                | Linear, logical, sequential; emphasis on problem solving                         | Lateral, holistic, simultaneous; emphasis on accepting one’s situation         |
| Work habits and practices                  | Task-oriented; rewards based on completion and achievement; work has intrinsic value | Relationship or process-oriented; rewards may be based on seniority; work is a necessity |
| Time consciousness and how to spend time   | Linear, exact time emphasis, promptness is valued; time = money orientation      | Elastic or relative time; greater emphasis on leisure time; time to be enjoyed |