Digital Literacy: Cultural Stereotypes Online Problem-Based Learning Lesson

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Lesson Background	NRS Levels
Technology can be a powerful tool in combating stereotypes and negative representations of one's own culture online. Although the internet allows erroneous portrayals of a culture and identity to be disseminated, it also provides a forum for response. This problem-based task is a tech-rich follow-up that can come on the heels of a separate lesson on cultural stereotypes and bias. The activities offer the students a means of learning how to employ technologies to add their "voice" to the web and speak against stereotyped representations like those they previously learned about. The opportunity to speak one's own truth can raise awareness in the broader community about cultural practices, linguistic identity, and shared values.	Low Adult Secondary Education, High Intermediate ESL

Recommendations for Direct Instruction
• Model text is rigorous. Students will need to go out and find other texts that are similar. • It is recommended that students be assessed using Northstar prior to this lesson.

Project Title	Approximate Instruction Time
Problem Addressed: Cultural Stereotypes Online	2 hours

Instructional Objectives *(written in teacher language primarily derived from content standards and includes evidence of mastery)*:	Learning Target Statements *(written in student-friendly language and helps learners reflect on what they are able to do as a result of the project)* for learners' exit tickets, learning logs, or reflection:
By the end of this project, students will be able to: • Choose a course of action. • Decide on the message, format and means of delivery. Collaborate to enact the chosen plan. **The teacher's objectives include:** • Observing the students while they are developing plans. • Assisting as necessary with finding resources. • Helping the students overcome the technical challenges of designing infographics, crafting letters to the editor, producing short videos, etc. • Assessing the students' level of engagement, collaboration, and problem solving using the Engagement and Collaboration Rubric (Appendix C).	**Content objectives:** • I can analyze data in social media, news reports, and internet articles and identify stereotypes and misleading information in the media or online. • I can use a variety of digital tools and strategies to produce a response to negative or false information. • I can solve issues with technology. **Language objectives:** • I can collaborate to choose a course of action that addresses a problem. • I can use academic language to discuss authentic materials on the internet and in social media.

Lesson Area	Lesson Information
ELA/Mathematics/ELP Standard(s) Addressed:	**Main Standards Addressed:** **CCR Levels D and E:** • **R1:** Read closely and cite evidence to support analysis of text. • **R8:** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. • **S/L1:** Engage in collaborative discussions.
Central Skills Taught:	☒ Adaptability and Willingness to Learn ☒ Communication ☒ Critical Thinking ☒ Interpersonal Skills ☒ Navigating Systems ☒ Problem Solving ☒ Processing and Analyzing Information ☒ Respecting Differences and Diversity ☒ Self-awareness

Lesson Area	Lesson Information
Language Demands: Include academic language, language skills, etc.	Reading and listening to authentic (complex) media reports and articles on culture Students would be expected to use academic discourse in planning and enacting their course of action. Academic vocabulary: word families used in culture discussion, such as "affect," "correspond," "culture," "equate," "inaccurate," "justify," and "negative" Terms from the YouTube video "Stereotype Defined": "assumptions," "confirmatory bias," "tendency," "short cut," "omission," "distortion" Phrases for introducing and contradicting standard views: • ___tend to believe that … • Many people assume that … • It is often said that … • [but, however] • The data show … • Common sense dictates … • Research has shown … Terms in the Engagement and Collaboration Rubric (Appendix C): "adequate," "conduct," "productive," etc.

Lesson Area	Lesson Information
Assessing Mastery of the Objective(s) and Central Skills: (Indicate when and how assessment – formative and/or summative - will occur during the project.	**Proof of Learning:** ☒ Via observation of a team task (e.g., discussion, work on project) ☐ Via team self-assessment ☐ Via individual self-assessment ☒ Via team product ☐ Via individual product ☐ Other (Please list): **Proof of Learning Tools:** ☒ Rubric ☐ Checklist ☐ Quiz ☒ Other (Please list): **Ongoing Formative Assessment** ☐ Nonverbal responses to comprehension questions (e.g., answer cards, Kahoot!) ☐ Peer-to-peer quizzing ☐ Exit/admit tickets ☐ KWL charts ☒ Other (Please list): Posts in online classroom

Lesson Area	Lesson Information
Adaptations and/or Accommodations: (How will you increase access to the content of the project? Identify differentiations strategies.)	**For high-beginning learners,** the teacher could provide a personal experience story, elicit learners' similar experiences, and then construct a language experience "letter to the editor" in response to a headline about immigration or a tweet about one or more cultures represented in the class. To address the problem and identify a course of action, learners can answer this question: "What can you do when you see/hear___?" With support, learners at this level can also do guided searches on their phones for positive data and images about their culture, assemble an infographic in cooperative groups, and choose the channels on which to share their work. **For advanced ESL learners,** the teacher would need to teach listening, reading, and vocabulary strategies to help learners tackle the research.

Procedure	Description	Central Skills	Materials
Build understanding of problem-based learning. **Warm up to the topic or issue at hand.** Role of the teacher: Pre-teach. Make sure the students understand the goals and benefits of a problem-based approach for language. If this is an English language acquisition class, emphasize the areas of English that are developed in problem-solving activities. **Timing: 15 minutes**	The teacher writes the word "stereotype" on the board and poses two questions: (1) "What does the word 'stereotype' mean?" (Alternatively, the students could look up the definition of "stereotype" online) and (2) "What are some examples of stereotypes?" The teacher gives students a couple of minutes to do a quick write in response to the questions. Students then turn to a partner to share their ideas. The teacher asks for a couple of volunteers to report their ideas to the class. The teacher pre-teaches the relevant vocabulary (see vocabulary list above) from the (1:46) YouTube video, "Stereotype Defined" with Dr. Kira Banks. The teacher tells the students to listen for and take notes on: (1) the definition of "stereotype" and (2) the explanation for why stereotypes are harmful. After viewing the video, the teacher solicits the definition from the students and writes it on the board. The teacher invites learners to share what Dr. Banks says about why stereotypes are harmful.	• Interpersonal Skills • Respecting Differences and Diversity • Self-awareness	

Procedure	Description	Central Skills	Materials
	Think and share. **Teacher: "Let's take a moment to pause and think.** *Can you remember a time when you saw a negative stereotype online or elsewhere that related to you?? How did you react? Did you think you could do anything about it? How did it make you feel, and did you choose to do anything? Find a partner; describe the situation, how it made you feel, and what you did about it. If you did nothing and the problem is unresolved, ask your partner if they have any ideas about what could be done."* The teacher can introduce sample questions to support conversation, providing as much instruction and practice as required by the class: "What did you see?" "What is the stereotype?" "How did it make you feel?" The teacher elicits one or two examples from the class. The teacher also asks the class to consider how sharing problems with one another was helpful (or not).		
Example of a stereotype <u>Role of the teacher</u>: Walk through an example of a stereotype with the class. Prepare the students for the example with the pre- discussion	**Teacher:** *"Let's look at an example of a stereotype that is very common in the United States: the idea that all girls like pink."* The teacher refers students to Example of a Stereotype: All Girls Like Pink (Appendix A.). The pre-discussion questions can be completed as a group discussion, or students could be asked to type their	• Communication • Critical Thinking • Interpersonal Skills	• Appendix A: Example of a Stereotype: All Girls Like Pink

Procedure	Description	Central Skills	Materials
questions, lead them through reading articles online, and then conclude with a discussion summarizing what they read and exploring why stereotypes can be harmful, even if they appear neutral. Discuss the concept of "misleading information." **Timing: 15 minutes**	answers on a digital version of the worksheet and then share out. Have the students read the three articles provided. If time is restricted, have them jigsaw the articles and share the information they read. The teacher should point out that the image provided is included within the Smithsonian article and is an image of former president Franklin Roosevelt. The teacher then facilitates the post-reading questions. Again, the questions can be completed as a group discussion, or students could be asked to type their answers on a digital version of the worksheet and then share out. Emphasize how stereotypes are *misleading*. Teach this as a vocabulary word as needed. **Teacher:** *"Now that we have thought critically about the negative impact of a stereotype that may have appeared neutral and commonly accepted, let's start to think about other stereotypes we may have seen online, how we felt about them, and what we did."*		

Procedure	Description	Central Skills	Materials
Meet the problem. Role of the teacher: Introduce problem and vocabulary. Introduce the students to the problem using pictures, video, or texts. Ask the students about previous personal experiences with the problem. Introduce vocabulary related to the problem. Provide prereading/previewing exercises about the problem. These can be preselected problems chosen by the teacher based on learner needs; alternatively, facilitate a process of learner-chosen problems. **Timing: 15 minutes**	**Teacher:** *"Let's explore this issue more deeply. We know that people use social media to communicate with specific audiences for specific purposes, but sometimes these audiences and purposes can be broad, depending on your share settings and the people in your network—in Facebook, for example, how many friends you have and what you let them share about you. This may create opportunities for you to see ideas about your culture, language, and values that you don't agree with. Even if you don't use social media, you may encounter such imagery and messages on TV, in magazines, or on the radio."* **Teacher:** *"Here's a challenge for our class: How can we respond when we see negative or untrue ideas about our culture, language, or values in media and online?"* The teacher should project these questions: - "What examples do you recall of your culture, language, or values being misrepresented online?" ("One time I saw …") - "Did you choose to respond to the person or organization that shared these misrepresentations?" ("I chose to respond by …" or "I chose not to respond because …") - "What opportunities do you have to add positive representations of your culture, language, and values?" ("An opportunity I have to add positive representations is …")	- Communication - Critical Thinking - Interpersonal Skills - Navigating Systems - Respecting Differences and diversity - Self-awareness	- Sample Response Activities (Appendix B)

Procedure	Description	Central Skills	Materials
	The students then respond to these questions as a group. The teacher should have the students brainstorm possible responses to cultural misrepresentation. She could present the two responses in the Sample Response Activities (Appendix B): writing a letter to the editor and writing a comment to a post on social media as well as suggest others, such as creating videos or images that show true depictions, producing flyers or documents for sharing information, building an online community forum to extend the conversation, and using Facebook Live or another webinar tool to educate others. **Teacher:** *"You need to decide what you can do the next time you see misrepresentations of your culture online, in shared media, or in your school environment or community. You and your classmates will discuss different options, consider what is doable and likely to have an impact and on whom, and then map out your response."*		

Procedure	Description	Central Skills	Materials
Explore knowns and unknowns. Role of the teacher: Group students and provide resources. Make sure the students understand the problem and what is expected of them. Emphasize that there is no single answer or solution and that they need to choose what appears to be the most viable solution to them and be prepared to explain why they chose that solution. Group the students according to their strengths. As with project- based learning, learners can take on different roles based on their strengths. **Timing: 25 minutes**	The teacher asks the students to go online and find pictures of things that represent their culture that contrast with negative stereotypes they have encountered. If necessary, the teacher can provide key search terms that align with the students' cultural and national identities. The teacher has the students log in to the class secret Facebook group and post their pictures, sharing why the pictures caught their attention and describing how the positive images contrast with any negative stereotypes learners may be aware of. If the class is using Canvas, Moodle, Schoology, or some other learning management system, the teacher can set up a discussion there for this activity; however, with that option, the advantage of using social media that is relevant in most students' daily life is lost. The teacher circulates around the room to help the students with the technical aspects of posting and writing their descriptions.	• Communication • Critical Thinking • Navigating Systems	• Laptops and web access

Procedure	Description	Central Skills	Materials
Provide language supports for the students. Role of the teacher: Provide language frames the students may need (e.g., frames for stating a problem or proposing a solution). Provide planning tools (e.g., graphic organizers) for working through the problem and coming up with solutions. **Timing: 5 minutes**	The teacher should provide scaffolds for planning and supports for language and have the students consider the type of language that is appropriate for online discussions: Stereotype: _____ This is wrong because _____. The effect of stereotypes is _____. We found that _____. Data suggest that _____. Possible solutions include _____. One thing we could do is _____.	• Communication	

Procedure	Description	Central Skills	Materials
Generate possible solutions. **Consider consequences and choose the most viable solution.** <u>Role of the teacher</u>: Observe and support. Observe the students and provide support as needed, but do not attempt to direct their efforts or control their activity in solving the problem. Observe, take notes, and provide feedback on student participation in the activity and on language used during the activity. **Timing: 30 minutes**	The students' objectives include: • Choosing a course of action. • Deciding on the message, format, and means of delivery. • Collaborating to enact the chosen plan. The teacher's objectives include • Observing the students while they are developing plans. • Assisting as necessary with finding resources. • Helping the students overcome the technical challenges of designing infographics, crafting letters to the editor, producing short videos, etc. • Assessing the students' level of engagement, collaboration, and problem solving using the Engagement and Collaboration Rubric (Appendix C).	• Adaptability and Willingness to Learn • Problem Solving • Processing and Analyzing Information	• Class Facebook group

Procedure	Description	Central Skills	Materials
Follow up and assess progress. <u>Role of the teacher</u>: Provide the students with opportunities to present and share the results of their work. Provide follow-up activities based on your observations and possibly provide instruction on grammar, academic language, pronunciation, or pragmatic issues. **Timing: 15 minutes**	Students share the results of their work using the channels they identified. These channels could be as narrow as the class Facebook group, the school website, or the school environment or could include means of reaching the larger community. The teacher provides feedback to the students using the Engagement and Collaboration Rubric (Appendix C).	• Communication	• Engagement and Collaboration Rubric (Appendix C)

Note: The activities for this task are based on content created by the author, Jen Vanek, and Martha Bigelow in 2016 in support of their classroom research with refugee youth and young adults. The resulting paper was published as "Literacy as Social (Media) Practice: Refugee Youth and Native Language Literacy at School," by M. Bigelow, J. Vanek, K. King, & N. Abdi, 2017, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *60*(11) (https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2017.04.002).

Appendix A

Example of a Stereotype: All Girls Like Pink

Pre-reading Discussion Questions:

1. Do you believe all girls like pink?

2. Where do you think this stereotype comes from?

Online Articles:
- When did Girls Start Wearing Pink? (source of the image on the right)
- The Pink vs Blue Gender Myth
- Why is pink for girls and blue for boys?

Like other young boys of his era, Franklin Roosevelt wears a dress. This studio portrait was likely taken in New York in 1884. (Bettmann / Corbis)

Discussion Questions:

1. Is there a scientific reason for girls to wear pink?

2. In the United States, where does the idea that girls prefer pink come from?

3. In other cultures, are there different colors assigned to genders?

4. Do you think this is a harmful stereotype? Why or why not?

5. How does this stereotype lead to misleading information?

6. Were you surprised by what you read? Why or why not?

Appendix B

Sample Response Activities

Check out these two examples of ways to share your voice and educate others.

Letter to the Editor

Newspaper Name

Address

Date

Dear [name of newspaper] Editor,

I just read "[name of article]." The article showed/presented/depicted [the images or ideas that you think are stereotypes]. I think [why you believe this is incorrect]. [In the rest of the paragraph you can share your concern about presenting stereotypical images, including your past experiences with the stereotypes and why they are damaging.]

[End the letter with a request not to share such information in the future or maybe a different request for future action.]

Sincerely,

Name

Social Media Comment

I just read the above post. The article showed/presented/depicted [the images or ideas that you think are stereotypes]. I think [why you believe this is incorrect]. [In the rest of the paragraph, you can share your concern about presenting stereotypical images, including your past experiences with the stereotypes and why they are damaging.]

[End the post or comment with a request not to share such information in the future or maybe a different request for future action.]

Appendix C: Engagement, Collaboration, and Technology Use Rubric

Student name:

Area	3	2	1	Comments
Engagement	Very positive. Showed interest, enthusiasm, and a willingness to participate.	Somewhat positive. Showed some interest and willingness to learn.	Indifferent. Was minimally responsive or unresponsive.	
Class involvement	Made appropriate contributions. Listened attentively to others, was alert and on task, and made an effort to contribute.	At times contributed. Listened to others most of the time. Needed reminders to use time productively.	Seldom contributed or listened to others.	
Class conduct and respect for others	Was respectful and considerate to other students and the teacher. Demonstrated interest in others' cultures and values.	Was respectful at times. Expressed adequate interest in others' cultures and values.	Indifferent to concerns of others. Was engaged in unrelated activities.	
Cooperative learning	Used time productively when working in a pair. Participated fully as a member of a group.	Used time somewhat productively when working in a pair or a group. Partially contributed.	Made minimal contribution in a pair or a group.	

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Student name:

Area	3	2	1	Comments
Use of language and discourse useful for problem solving	Described problem and possible solutions clearly. Responded thoughtfully to feedback and contributions of others.	Described problem and possible solutions adequately. Minimally acknowledged feedback and contributions of others.	Struggled to communicate problem or possible solutions. Unable to respond to feedback from others.	
Use of technology and media	Accessed suggested media and employed technologies fluently. Drew on a range of media and digital strategies in response to problem.	Accessed suggested media and employed technologies adequately with support. Stuck to teacher-suggested media and digital strategies in response to problem.	Struggled with media and technologies. Struggled with teacher-provided strategies and resources.	
Total				Total:_____ /18

Next week, work toward these goals: