



SAUCY POPS is the popsicle flavor 5th grade students studying global communication in Brazil developed in their execution of THE POPSICLE PROJECT.

Title: THE POPSICLE PROJECT

Abstract

The study of international communication begins long before college. In fact, few university students take a special course in international communication. Thus, we as faculty must take an integrative approach to infusing international communication lessons throughout the mass communication curriculum. In this exercise, university students developed an instructional strategy to teach basic advertising principles and international communication while demonstrating their own understanding of diversity. The exercise integrates advertising, entertainment media and global communication. Developed by junior and senior-level college students in a service learning class, **the Popsicle Project** was implemented over weekly lessons with a fifth grade class at a local elementary school in a less affluent area of town.

Description/Explanation of the Activity (Including Learning Objectives)

The course where The Popsicle Project was introduced focused on diversity. It's entitled *Mass Communication, Service and Diversity*. The majors enrolled in the course are studying all area of mass media—journalism, film, advertising, public relations and communication studies. In addition to attending University class lectures/discussions, students were required to log 20 hours of service time with a community partner. None of these majors has an international communication course requirement. Yet, international and intercultural communication were necessary components of the students' service site assignment.

The students were assigned to a local elementary school that has adopted a focus on being a "School for Global Communicators and Leaders." The university students were challenged to develop ways to teach basic communication principles from their majors to a fifth grade class for one hour each Wednesday. **The Popsicle Project** was one of those exercises.

In the actual exercise, each student was assigned to one of seven groups. From there each group leader randomly selected one of seven countries by a paper drawing. Once the students found their selected countries they were each divided and given a (PowerPoint) slideshow and coordinated handout. The slide show had a brief country history (INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION), the activities enjoyed in the country (INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATON), the population split by age and gender (DEMOGRAPHICS), favorite frozen treat flavors, Pop culture (ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA), and a 5-minute entertainment video. The fifth graders had to fill in the information on the handout and then decide what their target audience (Audience Analysis), flavor of frozen treat, and what best style commercial ad (Advertising Campaign Development) would grab the attention and desire of their demographic.

The objective of this assignment is for fifth grade students to learn the rudimentary levels of advertising and global communication. The popsicle project required the children to study pop culture of other countries and find a way to connect with other demographics. The project itself was a culture shock to many of the students when they found the difference in interest of music, treat flavors and even population. The fifth grade students may have not been able to travel to a different city let alone a different country, but this project allowed the students to immerse themselves in other cultures through communications. In the end, it afforded them a level of exposure to global cultures that would not have been afforded them otherwise.

Rationale

Teaching university students how to apply their professional skills in a global and international communication environment can be a daunting challenge. While more and more of our university students are doing “study abroad” experiences, a majority are not able to make this a part of their four-year program of study. As a result, we must create opportunities for application of what they’re learning while integrating the global and international communication. In this exercise, the service learning environment afforded not only an opportunity for integration of advertising and international skills, but also a part of diversity, equity an inclusion pedagogy, all while working with a community partner. The Popsicle Project is basic enough that it could be adjusted with more sophisticated research expectations for more advanced (i.e. high school) students.

Learning Outcomes

In the end, University students increased their knowledge of diversity while also transferring their professional skills in advertising and international communication to a new generation. Below is an excerpt from the University students’ reflective essay that was completed as a requirement of the course.

EXCERPT FROM UNIVERSITY STUDENT END-OF SEMESTER REFLECTION:



“In recent years the introduction of the Internet alongside other new technologies has revolutionized the world as we know it. Even though currently the most popular use of this technology may seem to be showing off a well-cooked brunch or taking selfies with cats, there are those who see the potential of these advances to educate. That is the premise behind implementing global communication in school. We put this idea into practice at XXXXX Elementary School where, in spite of our short time there, we helped them develop key skills in public speaking as well as broaden what was originally a limited view of the world.”



... What we learned over the course of our time we spent at XXXX Elementary school was that teaching communications concepts work best when teachers and volunteers meet the students at their level, to convey topics to them in ways applicable to their everyday life, whether it means using music, creating videos, or social media. The phrase “global communication” does not mean the same thing it meant 5 to 10 years ago and 5 to 10 in the future it may mean something completely different.”



Interviewed about the partnership and The Popsicle Project, the TEACHER/LIBRARIAN (Community Partner) had this to say:

“They’re supposed to be able to create a popsicle flavor that’s going to sell in their country and develop a campaign for how to do it. So it’s involving a whole variety of skills. The interest level is pretty high. There were provided video of the pop culture is there. And, there was a lot of dancing and singing. They were really fired up