



Pelican Family

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1. Overview and Objectives

Activity Overview

In this activity, participants attend a welcoming ceremony in a simulated foreign culture. The Pelican family (a man and two women) greet the participants in silence. The guests are expected to do as the hosts do and not speak. After the ceremony, participants will share their impressions and try to understand the underlying workings and motives of this particular culture. The final part, which reveals the origins and thus true nature of this culture, actually serves to unveil the workings of the minds of the participants when faced with an unknown cultural environment.

Learning Objectives

General Objectives

- To compel participants to discover the ethnocentric views they might have on other cultures and which create judgments and labelling.

Keywords

ethnocentrism, intercultural awareness, surface culture, deep culture, experiential activity

2. Activity Context

This activity can be applied in any Intercultural Communication training or SLA training in which the discussion of ethnocentric views is desirable or needed. Since it requires a minimum ability to reflect on one own’s assumptions and judgements during a foreign situation, I suggest it should be applied to participants of High School level and up.

Students

Number of students	8 Min.	30 Max.
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Do students need to use a second language?		<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
What is the second language?	The material instructions are written in English, but any other L2 is possible if the teacher translates rules & materials to the target language.		
Level(s) in target language:*	<p>Elementary school or younger</p> <p>Beginner CEFR A1 IELTS 1.0-2.0 TOEIC 120-220</p> <p>Pre-intermediate CEFR A2 IELTS 2.5-3.0 TOEIC 225-500</p> <p>✓ Intermediate CEFR B1 IELTS 3.5-4.5 TOEIC 500-700</p> <p>✓ Advanced-Intermediate CEFR B2/C1 IELTS 5.0-6.5 TOEIC 700-900</p> <p>✓ Advanced CEFR C1 / C2 IELTS 7.0 + TOEIC 900+</p>		

* These levels are approximations; use your judgement
 * For activities related to English, please try to allocate the minimum level within the continuum on the right.
 * See appendix at the end of this document for reference about these mastery levels.

Comments

If used under a SLA context, the above minimum level requirements are relevant (See Appendix). However, this activity can also be carried out in L1 when the objective is to trigger reflections on ethnocentrism, judgements and assumptions. In the latter case, all activity instructions and handouts should be translated into the target language.

3. Activity Materials & Prep

Activity Duration

Total duration in minutes:	75
How many sessions?	1
Any homework?	No

Materials

Material # 1 Title:	Pelican togas
Material Type:	Costume
Material Access:	Can be bought locally. Any sort of toga would do.

Material #2 Title:	Pelican masks
Material Type:	Costume
Material Access:	http://www.supercoloring.com/paper-crafts/bird-beak-mask-template

Material #3 Title:	One chair per man (women sit on the floor)
Material Type:	Furniture
Material Access:	Can be bought, sourced locally. Any type of chair would do.

Material #4 Title:	One bowl/cup for each participant and each of the three actors.
Material Type:	Prop
Material Access:	Can be bought, sourced locally. Any type of bowl would do.

Material #5 Title:	LED candles or lanterns to set the mood
Material Type:	Prop
Material Access:	Can be bought, sourced locally. Any type of lamp would do.

Material #6 Title:	Optional incense or oils for mood
Material Type:	Prop
Material Access:	Can be bought, sourced locally.

Material #7 Title:	An unusual drink (for example herb tea)
Material Type:	Prop
Material Access:	Can be bought, sourced locally.

Material #8 Title:	Introduction to be read to participants
Material Type:	Printed Handout
Material Access:	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tI-9PvipYuQxMrzVz25QFSXhUSgzbl3G/view?usp=sharing

Material #9 Title:	The Pelican People Legend (for Native-level or C2 level English speakers)
Material Type:	Printed handout
Material Access:	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tHSqqC8C3sK2hDZia86zpqjBVXhcUbuU4/view?usp=sharing

Material #10 Title:	The Pelican People Legend (for B1, B2 and C1 level English speakers)
Material Type:	Printed handout
Material Access:	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iHY54rlyf6aRjAPFtwCB9-R5GIDjgLeT/view?usp=sharing

Material #11 Title:	Floor map & Arrangement
Material Type:	Digital handout
Material Access:	https://drive.google.com/file/d/11uap-Co7h9KD5MgHlBsMmPjVHWTSUptG/view?usp=sharing

Set-Up Instructions

1. One man and two women will act as the Pelican family hosts. They are dressed in togas (Material # 1) and wear long orange beaks (or a bird mask, Material # 2).
2. At one end of the room, the man sits on a chair (Material # 3), shoes on. The women, one on each side of the man, are sitting bare-foot and cross-legged on the floor. Shoes have been left in the entrance.
3. For the guests: prepare 2 rows of chairs facing each other with enough space between them for someone to sit on the ground between the chairs (see floor map on Material #11)
4. Do not use rugs or cushions for the women: they must sit directly in contact with the floor as uncomfortable as that may feel.
5. Set the drink (Material # 7) and the bowls/cups (Material # 4) on a table behind the 3 Pelican people.
6. The room will be dark, slightly lit by LED candles or lanterns (Material # 5). You can optionally have incense (Material # 6).
Estimated Set Up Time (min.): 30

4. Activity Description

Suggested Time (minutes)	Activity Instructions
5	An assistant acts as a facilitator to guide the group of guests to the meeting place. Please read the introduction (Material # 8) to the group of participants before they enter the place where the Pelican family is waiting for them.

5-10	Then introduce the group into the room where the Pelican family is waiting. They will see candles, smell incense and see a man in a toga with a beak sitting in a chair and two women in togas with beaks too, sitting bare-foot on the ground on each side of the chair
	When necessary during Step 2 (above), the facilitator will mention, with their index finger on their lips, to remain silent. S/he will guide the men guests to the chairs and the women guests to take their shoes off, leave them in the entrance and sit on the floor between the chairs. Make sure that there is at least one woman to the right side of every man. If there are many participants, have two facilitators guiding people to their sitting position.
	During Step 2 (above) , the Pelican family will wait without moving until everyone is seated and quiet. Pelican men and women smile often when they look at each other. They have a very gentle nature. Their movements are slow.
	During Step 2 (above) , the facilitator should also sit among the guests (unless you expect late comers, then the facilitator should remain in the entrance. Note that once the ceremony has started, newcomers will have to wait and sit outside the circle of chairs on a row of chairs against the wall prepared for them. They can remain there silent, as observers).
3	Greetings When all are silent the Pelican man puts his hands on the women’s heads. He makes the women bow and he bows at the same time. They wait then for the guests to do the same thing (the men place their hands on the heads of the women on their left and/or right and make them bow while bowing).
3-6	The bowl/cup ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two Pelican women get up and go get the bowls/cups. They bring and place one bowl/cup in front of each guest and at the end in front of themselves and the Pelican man.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pelican woman, on the right side of the man, will pass her hand three times above the man’s bowl/cup. • She puts her hands in prayer and bows to the bowl/cup. • She gestures for the guests to do the same.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Then she gives the bowl/cup to the man on the left. • The man takes the bowl/cup and bows slightly. • The Pelican man drinks from the bowl/cup. When he is finished he holds the bowl/cup on his lap and waits for the women to drink their own.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The women put their bowl/cup down in front of them, • Then they take the man’s bowl/cup and place it on top of their own bowl/cup.

3	<p>Gratitude</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When all are silent the Pelican man puts his hands on the women’s heads. He makes the women bow and he bows at the same time. They wait then for the guests to do the same thing.
	<p>Closure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pelican women take their bowls/cups and head slowly and silently towards the exit. The Pelican man stands up and follows the two women. • The guests stay where they are.
10	<p>Debriefing</p> <p>The 3 Pelican people will come back to the room with their attire off. Women can put their shoes back on and everyone can gather around in a circle of chairs or around tables to start the debriefing process.</p> <p>This part is extremely important and must be done in an orderly fashion. The facilitator should help everyone express in turn their impressions. One of the best ways to do that is to have participants discuss in small groups of three or four and then have each group in turn give a salient impression. The example responses should not be given to the group. These are responses elicited by other groups and can help if your group is stuck at some point.</p> <p>Feelings / emotions</p> <p>First ask the participants to express how they felt about the situation. They should only state emotions not try and analyze yet what they experienced.</p> <p>Here are some example responses: uneasy, uncomfortable, queer, strange, weird, funny, confused, conflicted, afraid, nervous, tricked, hated, wanted it to be different, panicked, awkward, wanted to leave, to disappear, hyper-alert, didn’t like it, couldn’t relate to it, etc.</p>
10	<p>Triggers</p> <p>Then ask what they think might have triggered these emotions and when. Here are some example responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from the outset • the gender issue (women bare-foot, men on chairs, ordering, hands on heads and pushing heads down, etc...) • the setting: dark, strange smells or sounds, remaining silent, etc. • the ceremonial: cult like, the attitude, the slowness, etc. • the rules: having to abide by different rules (like taking off one’s shoes), unknown rules, passiveness, helplessness, feeling forced, lack of communication, rules in opposition to one’s beliefs, loss of one’s usual anchors, etc.
10	<p>Opinions</p> <p>What do they think the rules of this Pelican society are, what are the unspoken rules and why are there such rules? Examine each event and try and find meaning in it. What</p>

	<p>do these rules and customs mean? Are they positive or negative, moral or immoral, modern or archaic? (etc.)</p> <p>Here are some example responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hierarchical, patriarchal, • live like cave people, prefer the dark • ritualistic • gender divide is not a problem • neutral / reserved communicative style
10	<p>This part is about giving insight into the workings of this particular culture. If you have time give the group a hint and let them try and figure out how this culture functions and then read the legend after everyone shared their ideas.</p> <p>The hint: men are considered impure and women pure.</p> <p>If you don't have time have a facilitator explain the real meaning of this society's customs by reading the legend (Materials #9 & #10)</p>

5. Additional Information

Tips during the activity:

Facilitator tips

- Go over the instructions above on how to facilitate this activity.
- Print out the necessary text in the appendices to hand out to the organizers.
- Gather the materials beforehand. Ensure that you have bird masks and togas for outfits.
- Set up a table behind the three pelican people so that the women have easy access to the cups/bowls and the drinks they will serve. We found it easy to have a hot water container with the herb tea.
- Before you do this activity, practice before hand all the sequences so that everyone knows what to do. If you are not ready for this act, it might turn out to be awkward and actually induce ideas about the culture you don't want participants to have ("they are not organized", "it doesn't make sense", "we were at a loss of what to do", etc.)
- make sure the room is all well set up before inviting the guests in.
- Note that we provide two different stories in Materials #9 and #10: one for native/C2 English language people, and one adapted to English learners from B1 and up.

Post-activity suggestions:

Wrap-up

After having read the legend, let people in small groups discuss their impressions about how they feel now, what happened in their minds as they first came into contact with this culture and why it happened that way. What are some examples they can draw from their real life experiences that could also illustrate the way we label and judge things from our own ethnocentric views?

Additional application scenarios

Classroom praxis

We have found that mixing students from different countries provides many varying reactions when debriefing. Different cultural backgrounds assume somewhat different attitudes toward what they just experienced. These comments provide further material to discuss reactions, assumptions, expectations, communication styles and feelings. Your role as a facilitator is to help the participants draw from this rich pool of data that they have produced during the debriefing time.



Acknowledgements :

This cross-cultural activity was developed around 1985 by the AFS (American Field Service) association for an orientation program teenagers attended before their one year stay abroad to live with a foreign host family. Since no references have been found on the Internet, the document here was re-created from memory and adapted. It provides for a model to set up the simulation in your school or university (Bruno Jactat, exchange student in Wisconsin, USA, 1985-1986)

Limitations of the activity:

Before doing this activity, you should practice with all facilitators until everyone learns by rote the different parts of the act.

Appendix

TOEFL	IELTS	TOEIC	Cambridge exam	CEFR Level	Skill level
					HigherEd 
118-120	9		CPE	C2	Mastery or proficiency
115-117	8.5		CPE	C2	
110-114	8	975-990	CAE / CPE	C2/C1	Effective operational proficiency
102-109	7.5	966-974	CAE	C1	
94-101	7	945-965	CAE	C1	Vantage or upper intermediate
79-93	6.5	900-960	FCE	C1/B2	
65-78	5.5-6.0	785-940	FCE	B2	Threshold or intermediate
53-64	4.5-5	785-795	FCE	B2/B1	
41-52	4	670-780	PET	B1	Waystage or elementary
35-40	3.5	550-665	PET	B1	
30-34	3	225-545	KET	A2	Breakthrough or beginner
19-29	2.0-2.5	171-220		A1	
0-18	1.0 - 1.5	120 -170		A1	

Source: <http://www.higheredme.com/2017/04/11/english-test-comparison/>