



Purple Eggs

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1. Overview and Objectives

Activity Overview

This is an activity that encourages students to observe, speculate about, and gather information on salient differences in the (foreign) environment. It is mainly a discussion activity which begins with specific salient differences and encourages a specific approach/attitude to thinking about and investigating them

Learning Objectives

General Objectives

- To provide an experiential understanding of the value of a specific approach to observing, thinking about, and investigating difference.

Keywords

intercultural awareness, cultural differences, observation skills

2. Activity Context

I often use this activity when preparing students to study abroad. Even if I have only very limited time for "intercultural training," I try to include this activity. It works best with individuals or small groups of students. When accompanying students travelling abroad, I try to find time each day to talk about differences they have noted using the framework provided by this activity.

Students

Number of students	1 Min.	12 Max.
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Do students need to use a second language?	Yes	<input checked="" type="radio"/> No
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Comments

It is important to conduct this activity in a language students are comfortable in. The focus should be on thinking rather than finding words to express the thoughts.

3. Activity Materials & Prep

Activity Duration

Total duration in minutes:	>25
How many sessions?	1
Any homework?	Yes

Materials

Material # 1 Title:	A series (at least 2 or 3) of photos of things encountered in a foreign context that are markedly different from anything seen at "home"
Material Type:	Digital or Printed Image
Material Access:	Google images has lots, for example: https://www.alamy.com/white-eggs-next-to-red-colored-steamed-preserved-salty-eggs-and-quail-eggs-for-sale-at-a-wet-market-in-iloilo-philippines-asia-diagonal-display-image343329649.html

Set-Up Instructions

1. Find some pictures online of things encountered overseas (no specific location, i.e. don't limit yourself to places your students are likely to visit) that are unlike anything in the "home" country. The "different" things should be visually striking.
2. Prepare to show these pictures to students.

Estimated Set Up Time (min.): 15

4. Activity Description

Suggested Time	Activity Instructions
2m	Give a little national and local context for the first picture you are about to show. (Eg. I was walking through a street market in Manila, the capital of the Philippines, when I saw this.)
5m	Show the first picture, and have students describe what they see. (Eg. It is a stall selling eggs. They have some white eggs and some purple eggs.) This description step is actually pretty challenging the first time students are asked to do it,
10m	Ask questions that provoke students to speculate on the reason behind the "unusual" thing they are showing. (Eg. Why are there purple eggs? Why are there purple eggs in the Philippines but not in Japan?) Possible answers from students: maybe they have purple chickens, perhaps they feed purple food to the hens, maybe they are decorated for a festival, etc.
5m	Challenge students to think of ways in which they could find out what the real explanation is (i.e. to check out the hypotheses they have generated in the previous step). Possible answers from students: ask someone, Google it, visit other markets.
5m	While it is necessary to reveal the answer (students really want to know), try to keep the focus on the process of: observing, speculating, and checking.
Variable	Repeat with other pictures (from elsewhere, if possible).



4. Additional Information

Tips during the activity:

our role is to stimulate discussion, NOT to provide answers.

Post-activity suggestions:

More pictures, same approach. It would be great if students who have travelled abroad could provide pictures of their own.

Additional application scenarios:

I do this with real experiences (not pictures) when debriefing a day of experiential learning (= walking about looking at things) when accompanying students on overseas trips.