

GYC202KhatibBio115

I will be using this assignment in my Essentials of Anatomy & Physiology class, Bio 115. Students enrolled in this class are not usually Biology, or science majors. Throughout the semester a great amount of information is covered, students tend to find themselves “drowning” with information and deadlines. A goal of mine has been to increase student activity and involvement in the classroom without compromising curriculum. Furthermore, I think it’s important that as individuals, we look outside our immediate bubble.

I have to start off by saying that this idea was not my original idea. It was introduced by a colleague in another GYC class. But I took the idea, tailored it and would like to adopt it in my own classroom.

Students in Bio 115, as I like to tell my students on the first day, spend the semester touring the human body. Exploring organs and seeing how they work together. I think that that is super interesting, but students tend to think that it’s super difficult (and boring). We do talk about diseases and dysfunctions of the organs and how that affects the body system as whole. But, what we don’t talk enough about is how we, as individuals, take our bodies for granted. I would like to take it a step further and would like my students to explore other cultures and research how forced traditions affect the body. This assignment is designed to target the following Bio 115 objective: “to instill an appreciation of the complexity & harmony of the human body & its processes, with an increased understanding & tolerance to insights of social problems.”

The assignment will be conducted in groups of 3-4. Each group will be assigned a major body system. Their assignment is to research a socially unjust cultural tradition that alters and/or affects the body. The tradition has to be: currently practiced (anywhere) in the world, target a group based on their gender, age, or socioeconomic status, and have a direct effect on the (assigned) body system. Students are to research the “professor-approved” topic. The research should include: a description of the tradition practiced and its origin, a detailed description of how the practice alters the anatomy of the given system, explanation of how the change in the anatomy changes the physiology of the system and the body as a whole. Students are to present their research to the entire class. As a supplement, I was also thinking of asking the “audience” classmates to come up with an educational brochure, explaining the importance of discontinuing the practice. (I am not sure of the last part just yet, I was contemplating having the group make the educational brochures? Still thinking about this part). Students will be graded based on the quality of the research, the presentation, and their ability to correlate the anatomy malformation with the physiology dysfunction.

This assignment, I feel will be as educational to me as it will be to my students. While doing my own research for this assignment I came across quite a few traditions such as foot-binding, neck-stretching, scarifying, genital mutilations, tightlacing, and breast ironing to name a few. I hope that this will bring the world to our A&P class. I am very excited about this assignment and I plan to pilot it this summer in Bio 115 class. It is a 4-week class with a small number of students, so I was thinking about having each student do their own research and presentation. With a small group, it will be easier to work out the glitches and have it ready to be used in the Fall!