

CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION: COMMUNITIES & CONSERVATION

SUPPORT: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

We pledge to help you find answers to your questions using a positive problem-solving approach. Some of the questions asked by previous participants are listed here. If you do not find an answer to your question, please email the instructor at: j-packard@tamu.edu.

Q1. Can I participate in the Training Workshop without registering for the seminar class?

Yes, you may request to be added as an "audit". This course is designed to be useful for students who need to receive academic credits, as well as practitioners who are more interested in the knowledge, skills and network to be gained. The workshop is designed to be delivered at annual meetings of professional societies, such as the Society for Conservation Biology. Each of the modules may also be used independently by instructors. If you are an instructor interested in using one or more modules for resiliency training in cross-cultural communication, your participation in the workshop would be welcome to share ideas about adapting and updating modules.

Q2. How does that work with both undergraduates and graduates participating in the seminar course?

Our goal is to create a collaborative learning community. The meaning of collaborative learning is that all participants learn from each other. This is a way of fostering promising undergraduates, so they have an opportunity to gain a sense of what it means to actually do applied science. According to this perspective, instructors have as much opportunity to learn from students as vice versa. Particularly in this line of inquiry, we are hoping the perspectives of undergraduates will be more diverse than graduate students, whose viewpoints are more likely to have been shaped (brainwashed?) by their experiences in the academic community. We are hoping that graduate students will partner with undergrads in preparing new case studies. Cross-cultural experiences may be still on the horizon for undergraduates and they will be better prepared by dialogue with graduate students who are actively struggling with how to make explicit the tacit knowledge that differs across cultures. Try collaborating on case studies!

Q3. I am a social scientist and wonder why terms used in these materials seem to have a different meaning than the way we use them in our discipline?

This is a good example of a cross-cultural experience. When the meaning associated with a jargon word is tacit, or assumed within one academic community, it may be misinterpreted and appropriated by another community. Alternatively, others outside the discipline may hear

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the word in one context and interpret it differently than those who have learned the explicit meaning. This is a commonly encountered barrier between academics in interdisciplinary teams. To bridge this information gap, we encourage you to add to the glossary and explain the tacit meaning in a way that is more explicit. Please switch into a positive-problem solving mode and send an email to the instructor to upgrade the materials. This would be an excellent example of collaborative learning.

Q4. I am a biologist and find the social science jargon to be really dense and confusing; help, how do I keep from drowning in these readings?

Welcome to the rich experience of communication within interdisciplinary teams! Chances are you are not alone. First, try using the glossary provided with a link on the top menu of this page. If you are finding words or phrases that are unfamiliar and not on this glossary list, bring them up in discussion, use them as an opportunity to network with social scientists and discover their meaning from a different perspective. By asking questions, you will be encouraging others to make explicit some of the knowledge that otherwise might remain "tacit understanding" within their culture. Sometimes it is only at the interfaces between cultures, that we discover what is tacit and what is explicit.

Q5. What are the elearning tools?

Students who register for the course will automatically be added to the course on the elearning site. It helps with communication among participants to use these website tools. Since this is a password-protected site, it is also a way that we can share the use of copyrighted materials for educational purposes. If you are new to the elearning web environment, use the "Technical Help" PDF for directions and tips. Also, network with other participants to learn useful navigation tips.

Q6. I cannot get into the chat room. Nothing happens when I click on the link that drops down and says "Go to chatroom." Am I doing something wrong?

Probably this is just a matter of downloading JAVA, or enabling pop-ups in your browser. One option is to go to <http://elearning.tamu.edu> and look for the tool [Vista Browser Check]. It will walk you through what you need to do on your computer. Another option is to call the CIS help desk: 979-845-8300.