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RACE, LANGUAGE, AND HEALTH: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION

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Abstract

This presentation examines how an interdisciplinary travel seminar to Costa Rica—co-developed by faculty in Spanish and Public Health—cultivates critical thinking, ethical reasoning, global learning, and intercultural competence as defined by the American Association of Colleges and Universities VALUE rubrics (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education). "Power, Self and Community Health" engages students in analyzing how historical borders and systemic inequities continue to shape health outcomes and experiences of belonging for African Diaspora populations in Costa Rica. Through direct engagement with Afro-Costa Rican communities along the Caribbean coast, students develop critical thinking by examining how colonization, migration, and racism intersect to create health disparities. This immersive, bilingual approach advances ethical reasoning as students grapple with questions of privilege, linguistic access, and justice in healthcare while confronting their own cultural assumptions and biases. The seminar addresses multiple dimensions of global learning: students analyze how global systems of power differentially affect marginalized populations, develop perspective-taking abilities through respectful community engagement, and apply interdisciplinary knowledge to understand contemporary challenges facing the African Diaspora. Intercultural competence emerges through sustained interaction across cultural and linguistic differences, moving students from surface awareness toward

sophisticated understanding of how race, language, and national identity shape life experiences. This presentation will highlight the resources and training needed to support faculty-led travel seminars, effective student recruitment strategies, and assessment tools utilizing VALUE rubrics for both internal and external evaluation of learning outcomes.

Keywords:

Intercultural Competence, Global Learning, Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning, Afro-Costa Rican Communities, Health Disparities, Interdisciplinary Travel Seminar