

Broadening student horizons

Students may lack a sense of the larger world, a serious problem in an age of globalization. I adapted an assignment to bring them into contact with other cultures. The original assignment asked them to write about a topic relevant to the class. Now, I have them visit a collection of English-language media from around the world (<http://www.wku.edu/teaching/media/reading.html>) and research their topic in international media. I specify that they must have 3 continents represented in their paper and that the articles selected should represent the culture of the country and must NOT be about the USA or research conducted in the USA and should not be an advertisement.

I have them summarize each article, answer if it is a government paper or independent press and ask what questions the article is addressing. I ask them to share the point of view or assumptions of the article, the facts and the conclusions drawn. Then I ask if the article is consistent what they've read about their topic in USA resources.

Finally, I ask for an overall evaluation of the topic asking how the articles were similar and different, if reading a variety of international viewpoints has altered their opinion, what surprised them in reading these resources and what, if any, implications they draw.

I assess their work on clarity, accuracy, logic, relevance, depth and breadth, and the absence of plagiarism.

I enjoy reading these papers as it sharpens my global awareness and I get a kick out of the insights students reach about global issues. My secret hope is that they'll continue to visit these newspapers in the years to come.

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