# Stumbling toward self-regulated learning: Using blog entries for promoting motivation, interaction and reflection

Alejandro Cerón, Mengye Liu, and Raymond Pang Department of Anthropology

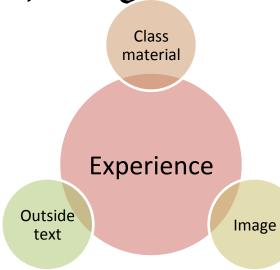
# 1. Assignment description

## **Blog entry**

- Free style, format (1000 words)
- Free topics, based on own experiences
- 3 elements: class text, image, outside text
- Explicitly say how the 3 elements relate

#### Comment to blog entry

- Free choice, format (500 words)
- What aspect of the blog entry
- Express agreement, disagreement



## 2. Assignment context, students

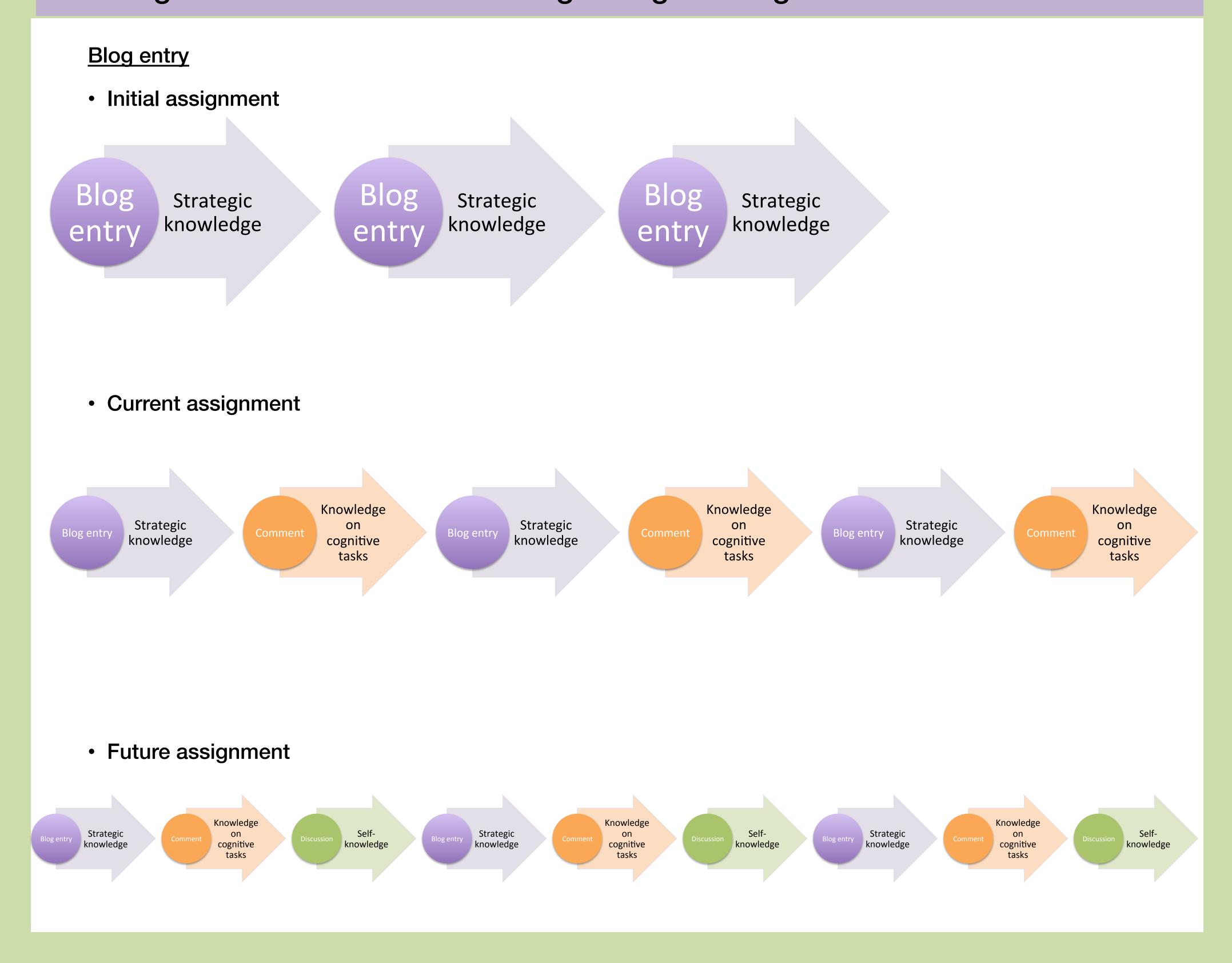
#### <u>Course</u>

- Since 2007, seven courses
- Medical Anthropology (5), Public Health (1), and Applied Anthropology (1)
- U. of Washington (Seattle), U. Del Valle (Guatemala), U. of Denver.

### **Students**

- Majority advanced undergraduates or graduates
- Majority anthropology majors
- 25% majors in health or in development.

# 3. Assignment evolution and self-regulating learning



# DENVER ARTS, HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES Department of Anthropology

Alejandro Cerón, Assistant Professor, alejandro.ceronvaldes@du.edu Mengye Liu, Master Student,

Raymond Pang, Master Student,

# 4. Student analysis and feedback

Ray

Mengye

Positive aspects of the assignment?	-We were not restricted by structure or format -Students have the responsibility to decide the topics of blog retries -And I was given the chance to tell my own story and experiencesI gained motivation by learning from others, in turn, enhancing everyone's learning.	-There were lots of benefits to me and to the class -The opportunity to intertwine personal experiences, with readings, and concepts, although the 1st assignment caused some initial stressI enjoyed reading others' blog posts, and reflecting on their comments on mine.
Negative aspects of the assignment?	-What makes this assignment interesting is that we could speak out freelyHowever, sometimes I felt like the topics of blog entries were too broad to discuss in the classNot enough time for class discussions	-A number of people expressed their displeasure with the lack of structure -I found that to be a strength of the exerciseIf instructor's expectations are made clear at the beginning, a lot of confusion could be avoided.
What did I learn from it?	-Motivation -how to integrate images with contents. It is powerful to choose appropriate images to strengthen my argument -I got to know medical systems of other places such as America, India, Italy. Their stories that we could hardly learn from textbook attracted meI gained confidence realizing other students were learning from me	•
Would you recommend its continuation?	-I would definitely recommend to continue using it. -Suggestion: narrow down the topic and discuss our blog entries in class	-Yes, vehementlyI have some ideas on how to further incorporate this kind of learning exercise into different courses.

# Strategic knowledge

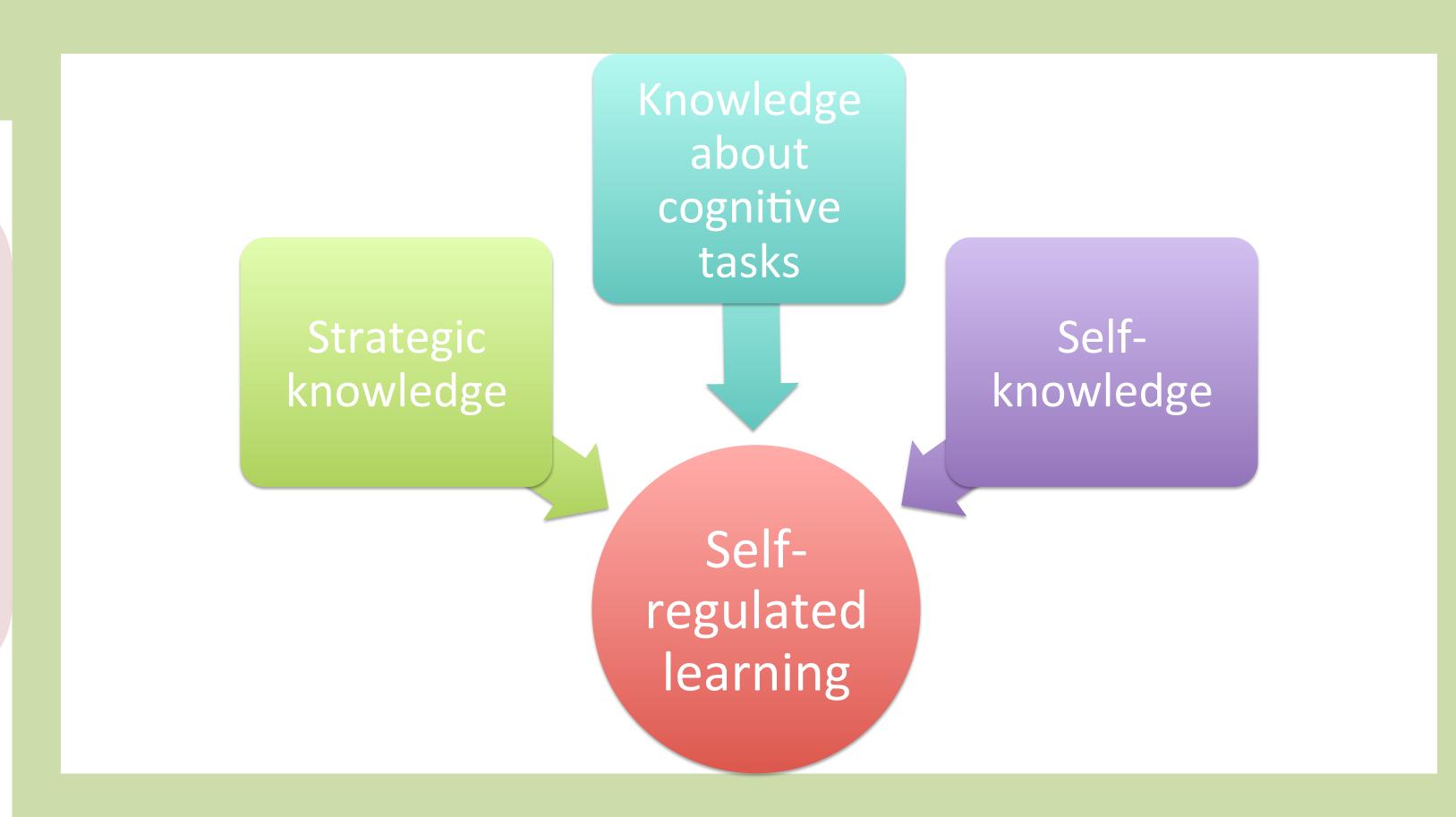
- Different learning strategies
- Planning and progress monitoring
- Organizing (concept maps and other)
- Rehearsal (memorizing)
- Elaboration (summarizing, paraphrasing, etc.)

Knowledge about tasks

- Comprehending directions (i.e. meaning of verbs)
- Assessing difficulty of the task
- Deciding wisely what learning and thinking strategies to use

Self-knowledge

- Knowing one's strengths and weaknesses as learner
- Accurately judging one's command of the material
- •Knowing what strategies work best for oneself to accomplish given tasks



# Introduction to Medical Anthropology

## Blog entry #1

If a Blog or Journal can be graded, a grade assigned to an individual member is applied only to that individual. More Help

### Create Blog Entry

#### Instructions

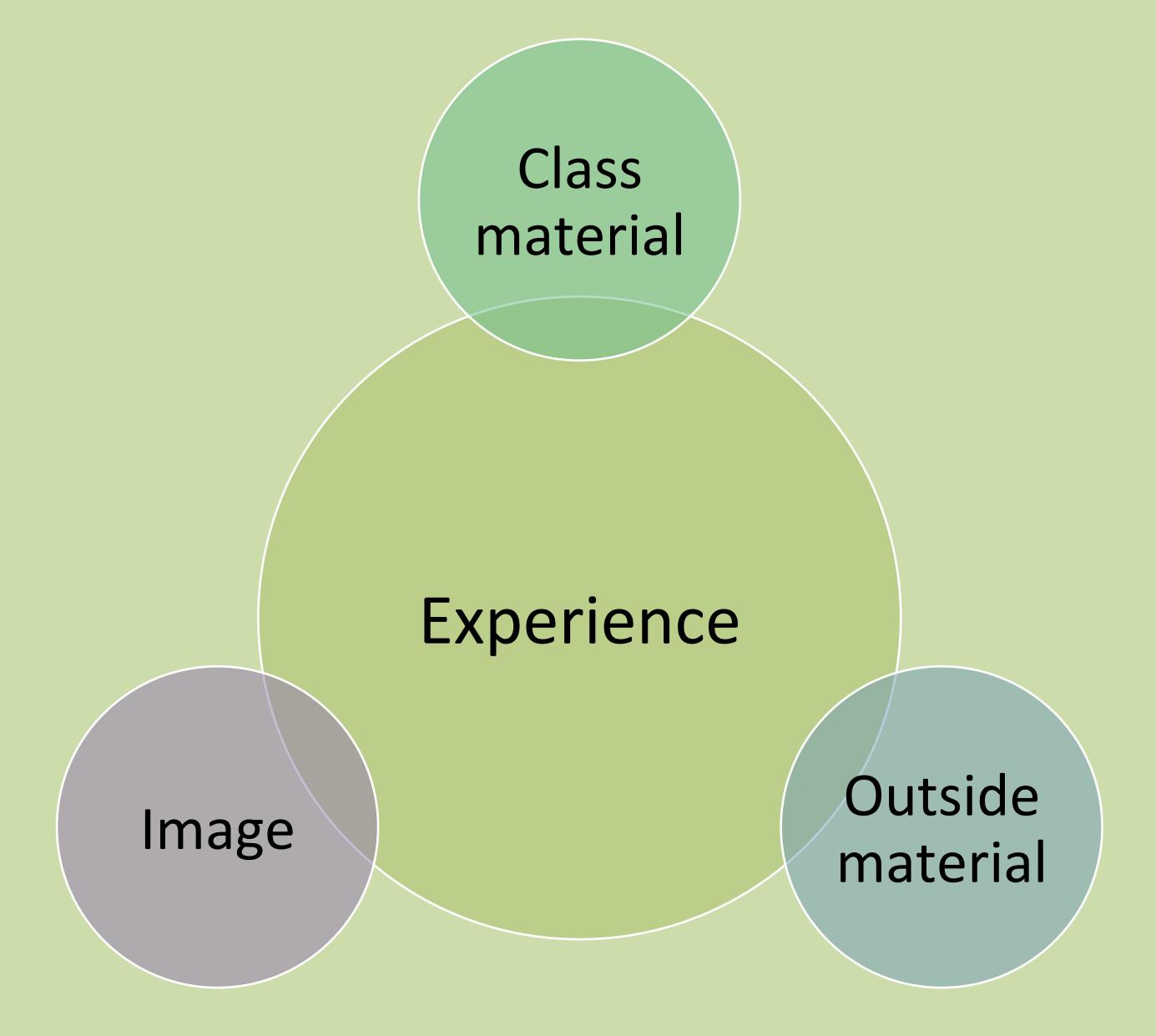
Describe an episode or event that has some bearing on health, illness, and/or healing, which you experienced, participated in, or witnessed at first hand. Bear in mind how we will be using these accounts subsequently; please select an episode that you feel merits sustained reflection, and one you will feel comfortable sharing with your classmates. Pay attention to how you describe and characterize: people, places, time and plot. Try to give coherence to the narrative as a whole but feel free to structure it as you want.

What for:	Help students integrating readings, lectures, and section contents with their experiences and knowledge.
What?	A blog entry making reference to one of the class readings from the previous two weeks (excepting the first blog entry, due on week 1). At least 1,000 words, and it should include: a. a quote from a class reading; b. an image; c. a text from outside the class (movie, poem, song, book, etcetera); d. an explicit explanation on how the two texts and the image relate to each other.

C.1. Blog e	ntries $3 \times 10 \text{ points/ each} = 30\%$
What for:	Help students integrating readings, lectures, and section contents with their experiences and knowledge.
What?	A blog entry making reference to one of the class readings from the previous two weeks (excepting the first blog entry, due on week 1). At least 1,000 words, and it should include: a. a quote from a class reading; b. an image; c. a text from outside the class (movie, poem, song, book, etcetera); d. an explicit explanation on how the two texts and the image relate to each other.
When?	Three times during the quarter, on weeks 1, 3, and 5.
Where?	Written in course blog. Turned-in through course website.
Blog entry #1	Describe an episode or event that has some bearing on health, illness, and/or healing, which you experienced, participated in, or witnessed at first hand. Bear in mind how we will be using these accounts subsequently; please select an episode that you feel merits sustained reflection, and one you will feel comfortable sharing with your classmates. Pay attention to how you describe and characterize: people, places, time and plot. Try to give coherence to the narrative as a whole but feel free to structure it as you want.
Blog entry #2	Apply 2 or 3 of the ideas, perspectives, questions, and comparative examples encountered in our readings and class discussions. The idea is that you reflect on different aspects of your account and the ways you represented them or did not include them in your original description. Your essay should include introductory and concluding paragraphs. You should explicitly make reference and quote from your personal account and from class readings and lectures.
Blog entry #3	Write an essay in which you: 1. demonstrate how one's social position and background shapes one's experiences, values and beliefs about the world and one's place in it. 2. Explain the social and cultural aspects of "expert" knowledge and how they influence the way we think about the world, its problems and its solutions. Draw on examples from your personal account and class readings, lectures and discussions.

D GRADING C	GRADING CRITERIA				
D.1. Blog entries		2 X 10 points/ each = 20%			
Each entry will be graded acc	ording to the following crit	eria:			
Criteria		Points			
Quote from class readings	Present/absent	1			
Image	Present/absent	1			
Text from outside the class	Present/absent	1			
Explanation of relationship	Present/absent	1			
between the three elements					
Knowledge of written	See rubric below	2			
conventions					
Clarity and coherence	See rubric below	2			
Rhetorical choices	See rubric below	2			
TOTAL		10			

C.2. Comm	ents on blog entries 6 X 5 points/ each = 30	0%
What for:	Promote interactive teaching and learning environment.	
What?	Each student will comment on one of his or her classmates' blog entries from the previous week. At least 500 words divided in two paragraphs: a. one explaining to which specific aspect of the blog entry the comment is referring to; and b. another one explaining why you agree or disagree with it.	
When?	Three times during the quarter, on weeks 2, 4, and 6 (two comments each week).	ch
Where?	Written in course blog. Turned-in through course website.	



D.2. Comments on blog ent	6 X 5 points/ each = 30%			
Each entry will be graded according to the following criteria:				
Criteria		Points		
Paragraph 1	Present/absent	1		
Paragraph 2	Present/absent	1		
Knowledge of written	See rubric below	1		
conventions				
Clarity and coherence	See rubric below	1		
Rhetorical choices	See rubric below	1		
TOTAL		5		

#### Cooking to Nourish the Body and Soul

Posted by Ray Pang at Thursday, September 12, 2013 8:20:22 PM MDT



From Hippocrates to now, our health has been linked to the foods we eat and how we choose to eat them. This comic includes a quote from Hippocrates that exemplifies a connection between the food we eat and health. Nowadays, many people look to pharmaceuticals or biomedical solutions as the first line of defense against illness. The human body is capable of fighting off many afflictions if properly nourished and Hippocrates was one of the first philosophers to proclaim the importance of food in maintaining one's health. Growing up, my parents both liked to cook and have always promoted cooking with fresh produce. In doing so, they reinforced the connection between good food and good health with sweet bell peppers, and bumpy cauliflower.

As I became more involved in cooking, I became interested in gardening and growing my own vegetables in my backyard. Purple Cherokee tomatoes the size of softballs with soft red streaks that stretched to the base of the fruit, tasted like candy. While I continually tended my garden during the summer, I couldn't understand how anyone could call broccoli the bane of their existence, or turn their nose up at the smell of a sweet onion.

My junior year of college, I had the fortune to work with a team of two to three other students to run a cooking/gardening class every Wednesday night for five months at a local Boys and Girls Club (BGC) in South Madison. All of us were student interns with Slow Food—Madison, which focused on healthy living through improving our food system by lobbying for local producers at our dining halls to teaching cooking lessons in low-income communities. With an emphasis on fresh vegetables, we decided that one way to address health disparities in children in South Madison is through teaching how to cook with fresh vegetables.

South Madison is one of the most diverse communities in the Greater Madison Area, as it contains a large proportion of the city's African American, Latino and Hmong populations. Incidentally, it was also identified as a food desert a number of years ago, for a lack of sufficient super markets and limited access to affordable fresh produce. Malnutrition is a problem that disproportionately affects children and the elderly, especially in low-income communities. Since access to nutritious vegetables may be out of reach for many children in low-income families, I loved the idea of teaching children how to grow their own produce, as well as use it in the kitchen.

While our goals were to educate the teens about eating healthy and cooking, we recognized that many of the kids may not go home and eat dinner with their families, so we strove to help the kids create meals that were tasty as well as healthy. The county in which South Madison is a part of has the one of the highest rates of black to white male incarceration in the country. So for many of these kids, after school programs such as the BGC provide a place to avoid potentially dangerous activities that could adversely affect their futures. This context makes the Boys and Girls Clubs much more important than a normal after school program, especially when the consequences of its absence are taken into account.

Around 6:30 p.m. Wally, Shelbi and I would arrive at the BGC with three grey plastic milk crates filled with plates, knives and the fresh bunches of kale, sweet potatoes and a bag of heirloom tomatoes. As we enter the kitchen, the kids begin to congregate around the door of the kitchen. Most of the kids are African-American, about half boys, half girls, ages twelve to seventeen. They range from very small and skinny, to tall and overweight. After school gets out at 3 p.m., the youth come to the BGC until they're picked up by their parents or brought home by the club. Many come because the friends there are kids from other schools or are simply their neighbors, while others enjoy the safety they feel while there. New kids would show up every week and join the chaos in the kitchen. The menu changed on a weekly basis as we experimented with the format, either by bringing set recipes, allowing the kids to pick the recipes or giving them free rein to create

By the time spring had come, the kitchen was a loud, booming place, filled with laughter, screams and the music created by the harmony of fifteen or more individuals flying around the kitchen in a kind of dance. Onions are thrown across the table from peeler to slicer, four girls stand over the stove as onions sauté with fresh garlic filling the kitchen with a pungent aroma, arguments happen, but at the end of each night we all settle our differences over dinner on a cafeteria style lunch table. After dinner, many of the students would leave to go home to their families and some would bring home leftovers to their siblings.

As volunteers, we all came from a position of privilege, being mostly, white middle class university students, who had the option and income to buy local and fresh produce. While the overarching goal of our community partnership was to educate the teens about making healthy choices regarding food, the vehicle of choice was powered by fresh stir fry, sweet potato burritos and digging your hands into the fresh soil outside.

The Boys and Girls Club is located in between section 8 public housing, a public playground and a large expansive open field. The gap from the BGC to the playground contained the kitchen garden the kids planted, which contained eggplant, cauliflower, tomatoes, lettuce, broccoli and carrots, among other veggies. The kids picked out each plant in a "favorite vegetable survey" we created, including broccoli. Many of the kids had an affinity for fast food, such as cheeseburgers, fries and the mcchicken, however that didn't mean they hated vegetables. On the contrary, many got excited at the site of fresh zucchini or broccoli, and lamented about the lack of table time fresh vegetables get in their homes or school.

I found the use of cooking to introduce new foods and re-familiarize kids with known foods to be highly effective, because in addition to gaining gastronomic knowledge and experience, they gained a tangible skill and a means to a healthier lifestyle.

Although cooking and gardening skills can help improve personal health choices and lower there stress levels, what is needed in this community and many ther parallel communities is funding for more sustainable programs that educate and opportunities that offer more than just floating slightly above or below the poverty means. While our program was considered a success, its future hinges on the university students' ability to get grants and funding on a year-to-year basis, which creates an inability to effectively make long term plans. Working with kids who grow to love vegetables and cooking is extremely rewarding, but realizing that their growth and exploration may end when the funding ends is very disheartening, because it reinforces the current correlation between minorities, poverty and poor health outcomes. The kind of knowledge gained from learning how to cook and grow food is more than just utilitarian; it can stimulate a healthy connection to nature as well as strengthen bonds between people over a shared meal.

#### References:

Thursday, September 19, 2013 5:43:17 PM MDT

First thing is first, you have wanted your audience to realize that when they think of health they should broaden their horizon into more alternatives such as nutrition instead of dwelling on the worst cases of healthcare phenomena. I applaud you for that. You have made it extremely clear that a child with healthier eating habits is what we should strive for and I completely agree with that. It took me a while to realize my brother's bad eating habits he has learned from his friends at school. Unfortunately I was not able to go out there and become involved in teaching the neighborhood kids what it means to eat healthy and to have a healthy relationship with vegetables. However, when my brother refused to eat the lunch provided to him by his school is when I had a change of thought. I thought, if I can't go out of my way to help others I must then take care of what was mine. I started to pack my brother what I considered was a healthy meal until I found out he was throwing away the cauliflower and emptying the Cheez-its box. So I have consulted a nutritionist and I was made aware that eating at least 3-5 meals as a family each week appears to have given children a sense of family connectedness, a stable routine and a healthier eating habits. These in return will help them improve their school performance and reduce their risk of obesity and disordered eating. That was what was missing from my brother's life. He missed out on family dinner and that sense of connectedness so I consulted our parents and we began a new tradition that involves the entire family contributing to the diner table.

It is very saddening that not every child is able to get the opportunity my brother has gotten and that not every child has a sister who looks out for him or her. But, your passion, which then turned into an involvement in the community to help out the underprivileged kids, is very aspiring and should be spoken of. We all know that eating fruit and vegetables, cutting back on sugar, and getting plenty of rest, and exercising regularly will help keep us feeling energetic and healthy. But what we may not know is that having strong and happy relationships can also contribute to good health. Therefore, simple projects such as teachers educating children to remind parents to have that needed family time should be where we start. Programs such as your internship at BGC should be encouraged because it teaches children they don't need expensive organic vegetables to stay healthy as long as they know which meals to cook using the ingredients they have access to.

It goes without a say that in order to continue programs such as BGC and to help improve their personal health choices, South Madison community needs as much funding as possible because as you have said without the funds such a blessed organization dedicated to change our views in health will not produce the expected outcome. Ray, you did an amazing job opening our eyes to what it means to live sustainably!

#### 🖺 Current Situation of Health Care for Old in China 💿

Posted by Mengye Liu at Thursday, September 12, 2013 6:58:20 PM MDT

My aunt who lives in New York City went back to China with her father the day before yesterday. Her father came to the United States this February and planed to stay here for a whole year. The reason that they changed their schedule urgently is because diabetes made her father became more and more sick; he had to go back to China to see a doctor. As a visitor, her father had no insurance. Two times of hospitalization here cost them several thousand dollars, which is beyond the treatment they can afford. Their story reminds me of my grandfather's experience.

Fortunately, this accident did not cause any organ harm and was not life threatening. That was a good news to us! Then, my mother started to worry about hospital of superior knowledge should not be taken lightly, as they can lead to subtle or severe ethnocentrism and consequently, racism. The "expert knowledge" of Europeans over treatment expense. My grandfather had neither medical insurance nor retirement pay, which means my parents have to pay for the total expense. After one-monthhospitalization, my grandfather felt better and went back home. The bill, which surprised us, was only \$1700. Take out \$1200 that would be paid by government, my parents only needed to pay for \$500! The explanation from medical staff solved my parents' confusion: it is our country's new policy that government pays for 70% of medical expense for people over age 70, no matter whether or not they have insurance; for those who over age 95, government pays for all medical costs. Moreover, according to the People's Daily, a newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Beijing will be the first city to extend access to health care, and government will pay for all medical costs for people over 90 in 2015.

old were afraid to see a doctor, and some of them even rejected it. I frequently saw the news on TV and newspaper such as "old man, who was too poor to pay a that there are many experts and that expert knowledge is culturally specific. doctor, was driven out of the hospital"; or "his children rejected to pay for medical costs, old man died from disease". To solve this problem, the Chinese government is investing more and more to improve welfare. This huge progress within such a short time is really dramatic. Now I can explain the interesting phenomenon that people came to the United States to seek a better medical treatment ten years ago, while nowadays people prefer to go to China to see a doctor---- almost the same medical technology, but the lower medical expense.

My grandfather is lucky, because government bears a large proportion of costs and his children are willing to take care of him. However, still a large amount of old men cannot enjoy the benefits, especially the poorer regions. In these regions, local governments have no enough money to improve health welfare. Furthermore, people who live in poor regions are much easier to be sick, which means it would cost much more to improve health welfare than wealthy regions. Compared with China, the United States puts more money to protect poor and ensure their health welfare. Another serious problem in China is health profiteering. Seeing a doctor in China is a complicated process, including registration, blood test, assay, X-ray, buying medicine... Each process has an exorbitant profit. I chose this cartoon because it exposes the problem of health profiteering very well. In this picture, every window represents a process to see a doctor. We can see the names of each process in Chinese above the windows (Registration, Pricing, Medicine, Test, Chemotherapy, X-ray, etc.). The pattern of window is like "\dia", which represents China Yuan (CNY). This cartoon satirizes the problem that seeing a doctor is difficult and expensive for old people. And they have to complete the whole process even though they just catch a little cold. The deep reason that causes this problem is that China is continuing its administered prices and hospitals continued to be operated by the government (Hu par. 1). As far as I know, doctors in the United States will not give an unreasonable prescription to their patients for exorbitant profit. The U.S. model of economic freedom should be learned by China. In sum, these two problems prevent it from further developing. Thus, the health care in China needs to be improved for the continued perfection.



However, we still admit that seeing a doctor in China costs less than in the United States. I have been stayed here for 1 year and I found almost everything is much cheaper than China except medical treatment. So the first thing that I did when I came to this country is buying insurance. But I feel that the insurance here is also expensive. Honestly, so far I do not know much about medical system in the United States, so I am still trying to understand why this could become a problem and how to solve it. After all, seeing a doctor abroad is not a practicable solution.

Hu, Shanlian "Reform of How Health Care Is Paid for in China: Challenges and Opportunities." The Lancet. 372.9652 (2008): 1846-1853. Web.

Wang, Minghao. "People Over Age 90 See a Doctor for Free." The People's Daily. Web. 16 Oct. 2012.

Picture is from Google

Tuesday, September 17, 2013 11:03:58 PM MDT

#### Mengye -

You're article fascinated me. The whole blog entry is very understandable, and you have very good arguments and examples.

I like the way you compare the health care expenses in US and China. Unfortunately, the expenses in America is way to high, and its sad to think about that you can get the exactly same medicines in other countries for a lower price. As you mentioned you're aunt had to pay several thousands of dollar for treatments she in fact can't afford, only for two visit's at the hospital. That is totally unacceptable! Furthermore, you describe that your grandfather injured his leg and had to be hospitalized. Besides it's very impressive the scheme you're have in China, with cheaper prescribed medication and hospitalization for people who are getting old. I mean think if you're parents have to pay for you're grandfather's injury in American prizes, it would have been completely different! Paying 500\$ for the whole hospitalization is very cheap, for such a good medical care.

I'm agreeing about that China is doing a better job in health and medical benefits for their patients than what US do. They can't even be compared. I mean earlier today I read about a girl who broke her back and that the doctors spend as short time as they could to figure out what's wrong with her. The doctor said that the girl only had pinched her back. Luckily the doctor found out in the last minute that they should take an X-ray just to check in case. And by doing that, the doctor got shocked, because she in fact had broke her back. I'm extremely surprised about that situation because the doctors try to use as short time they can to reach as many patients as possible - because the more patient they take, the more profit they get. But in china it's seems to be that the medical and hospitalization is very cheap and that the doctors spend as much time as they can with the patient. For brining my home country Norway in to the picture. I have to say that we don't even need insurance. Every hospitalization and medication is extremely cheap because these things are important to us as humans. For example if you have an emergency, it's all free. Health care is extremely important in Norway, and the government is trying to do everything they can to make it even cheaper. So when I heard you're statement of how it is in China, I got really impressed. And in another way, its scary to think about that China has the exact same technology as US, but that you have to pay more then twice the prize for the same health care and medicines.

Why do it have to be this way? Why can't health care has the same medical costs everywhere in the world? I mean, why do medical aids have to be so expensive is US when you can get it cheaper in another country?

Thanks for sharing this story with us. It was very interesting to hear about your grandfather and how he was taken care of by the health care system in China.

Sunday, September 22, 2013 2:28:58 PM MDT

I really enjoyed reading your entry, and completely agree with you that China's health care is increasing tremendously. From what I know about the health care system in China, they don't have clinics like the US, however, they get all the treatments in a hospital setting, whether it's a serious or minor injuries. When the government pays for 70% of hospital fees, it is a huge relieve because things can get so expensive when taken care of at the hospital.

From my own experience, my grandmother was hospitalized because she had an asthma attack, and they gave her albuterol while in the hospital and the treatment was about three times as much as the one albuterol she usually gets subscribed by her family doctor. Regarding the comments above, I haven't experienced a doctor who rushes with examinations, though I am sure there are doctors who tries to get through as many patients as possible. But My father went to this doctor for his carpal tunnel, and all the visits were paid through insurance, except copayments, and the doctor kept scheduling appointments to see my father and each visits were just simple questions like "How are you feeling" "How is the pain from 0-10" "Are you taking medication to relieve the pain" and then he subscribes hydrocodone, a strong pain reliever. I was guestioning why my the doctor kept wanting to make follow up and it all made sense when my father told me each visits copayment was \$60 plus insurance payments to the doctors. This could be

because it wasn'tin the hospital so these doctors aren't seeing as many patients as a doctor in the hospital would. This reminds me of what we talked about in class. Professionals lives in the same world as nonprofessional, but what "professionals" tell us are true and important. because when a doctors office calls and tells you the doctor wants to schedule a follow up appointment of course you will go because you don't know whats wrong, and you don't want to risk the chance. Then you have to pay for medication and such and drugs are so expensive now! Mengye mentioned in class that drug costs in China is so much cheaper than it is here in the US. We start to really question how come everything in the US, not just health care and drugs, are so much more expensive when it is the same thing that is being sold in a different country for fraction of the price? Thank your for the entry Mengye!

Growing up in a middle-class family with two college-educated parents of color, I had a slightly different experience than my friends. Not because we were so different but because I firmly believe everyone is raised in a unique environment under unique parents. There are many factors that have contributed to me being in the place I currently occupy and seeing the world the way I do, and a I would argue that good portion of them have nothing to do with me, but they shape the way I see the world and

🖺 Deconstructing the link between Ethnocentrism and Expert Knowledge 🛭

Posted by Ray Pang at Thursday, October 10, 2013 11:44:16 AM MDT

I had the fortune to grow up with two parents who installed a high value on education, as well as a grandfather who was a collegiate professor and chemist. Through the lessons I learned from them, I adopted a good portion of their values as my own, and I came to "see" the value of science and a high level of education, in addition to the importance of creativity and individual thought. My grandfather speaks Yiddish and would use different phrases to represent values or good traits one should strive for, most notably, "be a mensch (well behaved child), and I strove to do many of the things that my parents valued, because over time they became ingrained with my own values. In addition, like many children of parents who participated in the civil rights movements of the 60s and 70s, I was taught a sense of "fairness" and the importance of fighting for what one believes in. However, independent thought and "fairness" did not always coincide with being a mensch.

Looking at my own experiences, I've learned how to identify the privileges and advantages that I had and still have. For example; I grew up with both my parents present and married, lived in one house for all of my pre-college education, received very good medical care, and resided in a safe neighborhood with good public schools, and am a male, among many other positive social determinants in my life.

These privileges helped steer me towards where I am now, and towards an education in anthropology, which originally attracted me due to its emphasis on understanding and empathy. However, it's important to identify what kinds of opinions and systems of knowledge were valued in my upbringing and how they tint my worldview. With a chemist for a grandfather and an engineer for a mother, there has always been an emphasis on the importance of western science because of its ability to "prove" truth. However, as I have matured I began to develop questions regarding the validity of different "truths". For example, using tools of anthropology, one can deconstruct the seemingly impervious fortress of western science and the scientific method, by examining whom it privileges with the authority of knowledge creation, and whom it disempowers. Even in anthropology, especially in anthropology, there is and has been a hierarchy of privilege regarding who can create knowledge and who has the power of representation. By critiquing our own forms of knowledge creation and recognizing the power structures that benefit or suffer from such privileges, I think we can better empathize with the other and identify our own ethnocentrism, as well as truly benefit from the notion that our way of thinking is not inherently better than others, because it is flawed as well.

When we critique the construction of knowledge, we're really examining the idea of expert knowledge at a microscopic level. On daily basis', societies accept "expert knowledge" that is created by experts, who are usually qualified (in the "western" world) by some central institution. In class we've talked about the manner in which medical doctors are deemed experts and have authority over local healers, whose practices and experience can be marginalized by foreign systems of knowledge. There are many forms of authoritative knowledge and many difference realms of existence where expert knowledge plays a role.

Often, different forms of expert knowledge come into conflict with each other. Typical conflicts between different systems of knowledge can include encounters between different religious groups, colonialism and other forms of "exploration". The role MSF plays as a carrier of expert knowledge is an important distinction to make, as it's very important to our class discussions. While MSF does very good work by helping those in need of medical care, they also impose a aura of authority, because there is an implicit assumption that biomedicine is the best form of treatment and the cure to the afflictions of the less developed world. (Redfield; 2013) This is a very powerful My grandfather, who lives in China, is 93 years old. Last year, when he walked down the stairs and intended to take a walk, he accidentally fell down the stairs. This assumption to make, because it has implications beyond medical care, but also in organization of government, local practices of agriculture, child rearing, etc. While I may not accident made him broke his leg. Because of his age, my parents and I felt anxious about if he could survive this trouble. Being hospitalized was the only solution. argue that someone with a life threatening staff-infection needs some form of emergency treatment and most likely, antibiotics (if it is not a resistant strain), these assumptions religion, medicine, government and all aspects of social life were some of the main justifications for colonialism and the widespread racism and subjugation of millions of

My roommate and I often discuss issues of ethnocentrism and racism, because he feels like he is too ethnocentric sometimes and doesn't know how to fix it. While we're both from relatively similar socio-economic backgrounds and went to the same schools throughout our adolescent years, we have different ways of looking at the world. So recently he's been asking what he can do to understand other's points of views, such as feminist perspectives, the experiences minorities have vs. his experiences as a white male, and how to reconcile with the concept of white-male privilege. As someone who has studied the concept of ethnocentrism and expert knowledge, all I can tell him is that trying to be non-ethnocentric or not say offensive things is not the root of the issue. Instead of justifying one way of thinking as superior or inferior, it seems better to Comparing these two stories, I realize that China is doing a better job in health and medical benefits. Think about what government did five years ago. At that time, accept that your rational of thinking isn't someone else's and more importantly, that other's reasoning might be just as solid and rational as your cultural explanation to them the coverage of insurance was a little portion; people who had no retirement pay, thus no insurance, had to afford whole cost of medical expense. As a result, the \_\_\_\_\_ for the same phenomena. Rather than attempting to not be ethnocentric, continuing to learn about other's ways of life seems to be the best method, as well as recognizing

> "Within the health sector, failure to implement the principles of primary health, care as set out in the Alma-Ata declaration, has significantly aggravated the global health crisis. Governments and the international community are fully responsible for this failure.

It is now essential to build a concerted international effort to put the goal of Health for All in its rightful place on the development agenda. Genuine, people-centered nitiatives must be strengthened to increase pressure on decision makers, governments and the private sector to ensure that the vision of Alma-Ata becomes a reality." (People's Charter for Health; 2013)



In this text, the People's Health Movement claims the failure to implement effective health care institutions is a result of governments and the international community. is is a direct challenge to the status quo of health care, and who can create knowledge regarding that state of worldwide health care. Traditionally, this has been left to governments, aid organizations or international institutions such as the WHO. In accusing them of institutional failure, the PHM is challenging the authoritative knowledge of such health structures as well as implying their expert knowledge by suggesting solutions to the declared crisis.

This ties into the photograph of a traditional healer because it represents a different form of expert knowledge. In the photograph the healer is not using equipment that would indicate expert status in the U.S. or Europe, and there are also no plaques on the wall that "certify" the individual as an expert. However, from the picture it looks as though she is feeling a pregnant women's belly as part of some diagnosis or measurement of well-being. Obviously, this is all speculation and you can see the linguistic trap I fall into by using biomedical terms such as "diagnosis" and "measurement". This points at the problem of trying to understand another way of meaning and understanding, while using vocabulary from one's own system of understanding. For all we know, this individual could be government certified and trained, but the assumptions that I have regarding medical professionals and healers do not match up with the picture of this lady in a patterned shirt sitting next to her patient on a straw floor, with her hand on her swollen belly.

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Wednesday, October 16, 2013 12:59:08 PM MDT

I enjoyed your blog, I think you were effective in discussing the themes of ethnocentrism. I would agree that individual backgrounds largely influence ones opinion of their life and those around them. I would argue that personal experience is the main cause of ethnocentrism. I would tell your roommate that although he feels guilty of being ethnocentric that this is the first step in changing your reactions and making them less ethnocentric. It is difficult to change your background and cultural experiences, that form who you are and how you react. Rather I think that your roommate should instead be open to other peoples cultures and utilize neutral terms. But I feel it is impossible for one person to accept all other cultures as their own, and become anti-ethnocentric. This becomes difficult because cultures have varying and often conflicting views, so it is difficult to agree with every other culture or group.

I think your picture could have been more representative of your discussion, or elaborate more in regards to ethnocentrism within the medical field. I think you needed an image that depicted a persons struggle to remain un-ethnocentric. I think it could have been interesting to elaborate upon others reactions towards your life. You mentioned "Growing up in a middle-class family with two college-educated parents of color," it would be interesting to hear how people have responded towards this statement. Have you ever been treated differently, maybe in elementary school? I know that I was treated differently because I came from a single parent home, and concurrently because my mother was college educated. It would be interesting to hear your perspective on how ethnocentrism has affected your life, if it did at all, in this manner.

Thursday, October 17, 2013 5:39:07 PM MDT

Your post is very well written, very open minded about different worldly point of views, and thoughtful. I loved how you used yourself as the main character in this blog and how your environment helped impact and create the way you perceive this world as well as your values. Most of all, you mentioned how your particular environment allowed you to question life and deepen individual thought. I think you are completely right. Environment and the influential people that you grow up with, whether they are your parents, grandparents, or friends, help shape the way you see this world. They trigger a personal intellectual growth, and in your case as well as mine, our environment has encouraged us to critically question why certain things are the way they are, and what are the actual validities of different "truths" on a deeper philosophical and anthropological scale of thought. Although I do not think that all ethnocentric thinking leads to racism, it does have the potential to do so and therefore, the first step of avoiding this is to recognize your own ethnocentric behavior. The fact that your friend recognizes this makes me believe that he is on the right path! I believe that it is okay to be ethnocentric, as long as you realize the simple concept that we are all human and therefore all equal, no matter how weird you think something is! Your beliefs do not overrule someone else's beliefs. If fact, I believe that as anthropologists, we must firstly acknowledge are own ethnocentrism surrounding a personal culture BEFORE we interpret why things are the way they are. As Claude Levi Strauss said, our " aim is neither to expose the one (culture) nor to authenticate the other, but rather to understand a moral and social phenomenon which is peculiar to France (and everywhere else) and is, even there, of recent origin."(Levi-Strauss interview). It is the difference in cultures and beliefs that attract us to understand them in the first place. It would be very difficult for us to go study a completely different culture without blocking our internal and initial ethnocentric perspective of it. I do not believe that any anthropologists or ethnographers can immediately feel comfortable and immerse themselves in a culture where for example, child infanticide is common, and to see it happen before their eyes without being able to do or think anything about it! Although this is a very extreme example, it does refer to your point: "By critiquing our own forms of knowledge creation and recognizing the power structures that benefit or suffer from such

privileges, I think we can better empathize with the other and identify our own ethnocentrism, as well as truly benefit from the notion that our way of thinking is not inherently better than others, because it is flawed as well." I think you gave great advice to your friend/roommate and I truly enjoyed reading your perspective on ethnocentrism and the

different systems of knowledge that in all, make us all human, "right" or not. We are all similar more then we could ever be different.

#### Acupuncture and Ethnocentrism

Posted by Mengye Liu at Thursday, October 10, 2013 8:15:43 PM MDT

A couple of weeks ago, we watched a video about acupuncture. We get to know this traditional Chinese medicine and its disputable function. Through stimulating certain points of the body by needles, the blood stasis can be removed and blood circulation can be adjusted. Acupuncture is an important component of traditional Chinese medicine. Although its theory is complicated, the essence is involving qi (an energy flows through body) and meridians. Chinese medicine considers that any kind of disease is caused by unsmooth qi and unregulated blood; to treat disease, doctors should focus on Qi-invigorating and Blood-activation. Acupuncture could prevent and cure disease through penetrating the skin to regulate qi and meridians. Nowadays, acupuncture is not only an efficient treatment in China, but also the legacy of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM).

Actually, acupuncture is not stranger to me. When I was 8 years old I experienced this treatment. At that time, I got vocal nodules and my voice was hoarse. My parents took me to see a famous TCM doctor in another city. I remember that was a small clinic; many people were waiting to be treated by acupuncture. My parents and I were waiting for a long time. I was too little to remember everything, I only remember my skin of neck was penetrated by seven or eight needles, and these needles kept penetrating on my neck for about 20 minutes. Before acupuncture started, I was so scared by these needles. I could not imagine how these thin needles can cure disease. While after needles were penetrated on my body, I felt interesting and unbelievable, because there was no pain and no blood at all. Before we left the clinic, the doctor said I needed to come again to accept the second program. Later, we quit this treatment because the clinic is too far away from my home and my parents had no time to take me to see the doctor. Since my illness was not serious, I did not take medicine as well. That was my only experience of acupuncture, and my vocal nodules were still there for a few years.

Later, when I almost forgot this illness, one day my doctor told me the vocal nodules were gone. Both my parents and I had no idea about when and why my illness was cured. I was curious that weather or not my illness could be cured immediately if I continued to accept acupuncture at that time; if the disappear of vocal nodules was partly because of acupuncture? It was hard to say that acupuncture is not useful to treat this illness. After all I did not take any other kinds of treatment. However, it was not as amazing and effective as I had thought. I did not feel better after having acupuncture and the disappearance of vocal nodules occurred in a few years later, which seemed to be less relevant with acupuncture. Many other elements could cause my healing.

The truth is, acupuncture is still our pride and legacy. Many Chinese consider it as a more effective treatment than western medicine in terms of the diseases that involve qi and meridians. The old generation believes acupuncture can treat any disease without negative consequence, while western medicine is expensive and less effective. This thought exaggerates the function of acupuncture and is ethnocentric.

With the spread of traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture becomes well known in foreign countries. Many Chinese doctors run acupuncture clinics to progress the Chinese legacy as well as earn a living. Inevitably, among these professional acupuncture clinics, some of them are not experts or fake ones. Once I heard from my mother that one of her colleagues was practicing acupuncture in Germany. I was shocked because his job, which is accounting, had nothing to do with medicine. Usually, it takes many years to learn medical science, how could be become a doctor in Germany after he quit his job in China? And my mother continued to say that he made patients bleeding by acupunctured mistakenly. Undoubtly, he was irresponsible and his "acupuncture" was a fake one. Can you simply judge his fake acupuncture can or cannot treat disease? But one thing is obvious that his acupuncture made patients to be more sick.

My own experience and this example make me think about how to consider our traditional Chinese medicine correctly and fairly. I believe that acupuncture is useful in terms of some disease and illness such as weight loss, cervical spondylosis, lumbar disease, facial paralysis, etc. Moreover, one important advantage of acupuncture is that it has hardly any negative consequence. However, we should admit acupuncture could not treat every kind of disease, and sometimes the effect of its treatment is limited. I am trying not to be a skeptic or ethnocentric based on my own limited experience. Also, it is significant to recognize the real acupuncture from fake ones. The picture attached with this blog entry is from an article I found online. The title of this article is "Even 'fake' acupuncture reduces the severity of headaches and migraines". In this article, the author shows an experiment that conducted by Klaus Linde at the Technical University of Munich, Germany. The result of the experiment suggested that needlepoints might be less important than we usually thought. The experiment is similar with the one in that video we watched. After reading this article, I think any conclusion is difficult and should not to be drawn hastily. I agree with the last sentence that mentioned by Line, "Doctors need to know how long improvements associated with acupuncture will last and whether better trained acupuncturists really achieve better results than those with basic training only." Furthermore, other elements such as placebo effect should also be taken into account, or whether or not this phenomenon also happens in other therapy.



Hi Mengye! Your post was so interesting to me. I really appreciated how you told us that acupuncture is really the pride and legacy of the Chinese. I think I would prefer this treatment to one where a prescription medicine is automatically given. It says a lot that much of the population in China chooses first to go to the acupuncturist, and in the US we first go to a western doctor where, more than likely, we will be given a prescription. And it makes so much sense that when one's balance is off, we get sick or experience problems. I can honestly say, if I had the finances right now, I would go see an acupuncturist. The other day I was walking across campus behind two male construction workers (they looked to be doing road work, as they had on heavy boots and brightly-colored vests). One asked the other if he had an acupuncture appointment that week. I was surprised by this, I admit. My (ethnocentric) mind held the idea that most people who sought acupuncture here in the US are more "natural" (whatever that means): yogis, vegetarians, etc. Before this I never would have considered that a large, rough, older man would seek healing through acupuncture. It's so embarrassing to me to recognize these preconceived notions that I held, but I am glad I recognized it and will not make that inaccurate assumption in the future. It must be really interesting for you to see how acupuncture is perceived here in the US. What do you think? Is it perceived negatively, as a medical practice that is not legitimate?

Or does it just depend upon the person who is seeking this treatment? When I lived in Mexico, I started to experience neck pain and developed skin irritations across my back. The only different thing that had happened was the week before, when I was in the ocean, something bit me on the foot. It had swelled up a bit, but went away, and as we couldn't see what bit me, I let it go. However, when I started having the rash and neck pain, I decided to seek medical attention. My host family urged me to go see their traditional healer; I declined. Besides the fact that I was 18 and had not experienced any other doctor than a western one, I was adamant that I was going to see a "professional" and to me, that meant an MD (again, I apologize for my ethnocentrism). I remember I even laughed about it later, telling my friends and roommates that there was no way I would see a healer because he would probably put a spell on me or rub my skin with strange elixirs. Oh, how ignorant I was in my youth. The truth is, I went to the MD, he looked over my skin and gave me a painkiller for my neck. That was it. I did not feel amazingly better the next day, not even the next week, but it did eventually go away. Thinking back on this, I realize now that I probably could have gone without seeing the doctor, and the same outcome would have occurred. I can also say, being older and wiser, that I would have taken this experience to see the traditional healer, in fact I wish I had this opportunity. Even if it did not make me feel better physically, I think it would have been an amazing thing to experience.

Thursday, October 17, 2013 9:40:40 PM MDT

Tuesday, October 15, 2013 1:22:45 PM MDT

It is interesting to hear about acupuncture from a person who had experienced it firsthand and has grown up hearing about it. I have always considered acupuncture as being one of those practices elite people do here in America because I haven't heard much about it and it is one of those practices not many people get to experience in their life time. So to hear that you had experienced it makes you a credible source to discuss your experience with acupuncture. Many people have written about the effectiveness of their experience with acupuncture but your experience has helped you realize that although acupuncture is a useful way of treating illness but it takes time to see its effect. And whether you heal because of the acupuncture or because of your body's way of healing itself is usually unknown. Some critics of acupuncture is that one may say it doesn't really work, that it is not proven by the double blind, placebo controlled, crossover study method. It is hard to test this way and in the countries where it is widely practiced, this type of testing is seen as immoral. And perhaps raising such skeptics may come to seem as being ethnocentric when it necessarily isn't. Generally acupuncture is objected to because it is based on a system of thought that is foreign to the West. This concept of Yin and Yang balance is not part of Western medicine.

The foundational thinking behind acupuncture is a view of the world based on five elements theory with five main organ systems and the presence of energy pathways in the body that are interconnected. And we have learned in class that illness is seen when these pathways and relationships between organs are messed up. Researches show that conditions of cold and heat, dryness and dampness, vacuity and excess are seen as important in practicing acupuncture. So a person's feeling of warmth might be called a release of heat in acupuncture and be thought of as a good thing, whereas in the West we might talk about the same feeling as a hot flash and think it is a symptom. Acupuncture also requires frequent treatments that interrupt the work schedules of the patients and that they will be charged excessively for the treatments, as they are needed

so frequently and for such a long time. It is also rarely covered by insurance. The patient has to pay the full price for it and therefore it does not make economic sense. Others argue that there aren't really any cons to acupuncture; you just need to find out a good acupuncturist. It takes at least 10 years to learn how to do it properly. To hear that your family friend who was an accountant started his acupuncture practice in Germany is shocking if not saddening. Whether that is being ethnocentric or not I wouldn't know but it is just morally wrong. But it definitely raises the question of authority and expert knowledge. Do you think the man was being completely ethnocentric for assuming that by being Chinese he could automatically become an expert at acupuncture? After all, great post!

Friday, October 18, 2013 2:55:04 PM MDT

Hello Mengye.

I find your blog entry very interesting, because you have a very good reflection of what you write about. And it is very interesting to read about what you say about acupuncture because you are describing it in a way that is so clear and understandable. You give the impression that you have grown up with this form of treatment, and to be honest, this is also something that is really primarily in Norway too. It is very common to go to acupuncture if you struggle with basically anything. As a golfer, I struggle very often with sore back muscles, muscle stiffness, and general back problems (golf is in practice not very good for the back at all). And through the

national team, I have been recommended to go to acupuncture plenty of time. I am equally impressed each time by how well it actually works.

You mention in your blog that many Chinese believe that acupuncture is to see as a more effective treatment than medicines in terms of diseases involving qi and meridaianer. And that the old generation believes that acupuncture can treat any disease without negative consequence, while medicine is in itself expensive and less effective. In order to present my opinion on this, I cannot really say that I agree with this. Acupuncture is in many ways good and helps a lot in certain areas. But I would not say that acupuncture will be more effective than medication. This is because acupuncture means sticking needles into the skin to help with an effect on the body. Medicine is something we take through ingestion of tablets, syringes, or other things that makes us consume some medicine that should be healing. Therefore medicine is in many ways better than acupuncture the way I see it, but I'm also really agree that acupuncture is good when it comes to pain in the body that are affected by psychological pain.

It's scary that people can fake that they are acupuncturists while they actually cannot understand it, and does lots of mistakes. As you say one thing is certain and that is that the patient becomes more ill." I completely agree. And it's scary that someone actually has the ability to open clinics for acupuncture but that really cannot do what they are doing. So in some ways we should be careful about who people we use.

Once again, thanks for sharing this experience with us. It was very much interesting, and I enjoyed being a part of it.

-Mariell Bruun