

Cultural Appropriation-Appreciation Handout
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Please note: This workshop is not meant to locate “genuine” meanings of particular cultural practices, shame, blame or conduct fact-finding exercises about symbols and acts. It is a co-learning process, meant to encourage self reflection about intercultural mindset and incorporating cultural practices of “others” in an unequal power structure.

Key takeaways from this workshop

- An understanding of the continuum of cultural appreciation and appropriation.
- Questions to ask oneself about intent vs impact when it comes to appropriating and/or appreciating cultural practices and relationships to power.
- Please recognize:
 - This is a co-learning process. Presenters’ expertise stem from their experiences, they are here to act as guides to help navigate difference.
 - Culture is not static; let’s not devote time discussing what is a true culture.
 - All examples today feature South Asian perspective, since that’s what the presenters can most relate to. Other examples exist across cultures.
 - Identities are complex and so are these issues.
 - Being human is to make mistakes, and know that no one is perfect.
 - The point is to continue learning, asking questions of self, trying to gain awareness of when practices are harmful or not benefiting those without power or desire to commodify their experience.

Rather than asking the presenters cultural appropriation questions like....

- I respect Indian culture and have travelled there. Is my *kurta/bindi* appropriation?
- Can you tell me if X example is appropriation or appreciation?

...Ask yourself the following questions instead:

- Who’s making the money, who’s losing out?
- Is the act reproducing stereotypes in any way?
- Who has the power to make it look cool and modern?
- Does it disrespect the beliefs and worldviews of people that inspired it?



...If you realize you are in a grey area, consider the following for an appreciation perspective:

- Is there any credit, profit to source culture/s?
- Does it forge a meaningful connection with source communities?
- Is there support for respectful exchange of ideas, collaboration across cultures?
- Does it encourage culturally informed interpretations of a heritage?

Online resources:

- Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance Page:
http://aorta.coop/portfolio_page/cultural-appropriation/
- American Indian Health and Family Website:
<http://www.aihfs.org/pdf/8-1-16%20Cultural%20Appropriation.pdf>
- Education week class plan for instructors:
https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/global_learning/2016/12/addressing_cultural_appropriation_in_the_classroom_tools_and_resources.html
- In Theory podcast (clothing, music, yoga, tattoos):
<http://www.intheory.us/episodes/2015/6/24/episode-3-cultural-appropriation-ugh-1>
- Music and cultural appropriation:
<https://www.amazon.com/Dangerous-Crossroads-Popular-Postmodernism-Haymarket/dp/1859840353>
- Many more such resources exist on Google! Just write terms “cultural appropriation resources” and/or look for specific questions.

