Discussion Questions:

1. How does your own place or community influence your teaching?
2. How does place influence your students’ experience as learners?
3. What place-based assignments have worked well for you in face to face classes? In online classes? How are they similar to one another?
4. What assignments or activities do you use in your face to face classes to foster learning communities? Is there a way to approximate them online?
5. What assignments or activities do you use to foster learning communities online? Is there a way to approximate them in face to face classes?

Suggestions for incorporating place-based pedagogy in online courses:

* Place is part of your *institution.* Consider sharing a **land acknowledgement** and/or information about the history of your institution (does it have a land grant? How did it come into being in this location?) in the first module of your course.
* Place is part of *your* experience. Share what that means, as you introduce yourself to students. This could include where you grew up, where you went to school, where you live now, and/or how that affects your teaching and learning.
* Place is part of your *students’* experience. Ask them about it, in whatever introductions you have them do. This can include asking where they are from or live now, what their community’s biggest challenge around your subject area is, or something else relevant to your classes’ material.
* Your *online learning environment* (example: Blackboard shell) is a virtual place. Explicitly acknowledging that creates an opportunity to talk with students about what kind of place it should be and how you can create that together.
* Assignments can be a mechanism to get students to link the content from your course to applications in their community. This will look different across subject areas, but I hope these assignment prompts may spark ideas for your class.

Sample Place Based Assignments for Geographically Dispersed, Asynchronous Online Courses:

**Photo Illustration.** Ask students to choose key terms from a list, find an example of that term in the community where they live, take photos of that example, and post them to the Course Management System (example: Blackboard) blog tool. When I use this assignment, each student is required to caption their photos with the term they are defining and an explanation of how the photo illustrates that term. This assignment helps students engage with vocabulary terms, specify how the new material they are encountering in class is relevant in their home communities, and build community, by viewing and commenting on their classmates’ blog posts.

**Interview an Expert.** I’ve used this as a four part assignment: the first component guides students through a process to identify relevant sources in their community and draft topical questions for each potential interviewee. The second component is a draft email requesting an interview, which provides students with an opportunity to get feedback on their business communication skills, before reaching out to a potential source. Once their potential interviewee, interview questions, and email are approved students reach out to the practitioner and conduct an interview (some students have to contact more than one potential interviewee). The third component is a written report on the interview, which requires them to link their interviewee’s training and experiences to concepts from the class material. The fourth and final component is a video presentation (via online tool FlipGrid), reporting on their interview for an audience of fellow students.

**Create a Land Acknowledgement.** Students can research the history of the land and original inhabitants of where they live and share this knowledge through a land acknowledgement blog post or video presentation. This assignment helps students learn about the history of the place where they live, build cultural competence, and practice presenting complex ideas to an audience of students.

**Other possibilities** to bring place into assignments include asking students to:

* bring in news stories illustrating topical issues in their home communities
* describe how a state level strategic plan or policy shift would likely affect individual communities
* share images of local rocks and speculate about the geologic processes that shaped specific areas

References You May Find Useful:

John-Shields, P. A. (2017). Yupiunrirngaitua/The Skirt I Refuse to Wear', Culturally Sustaining and

Revitalizing Pedagogies (Advances in Research on Teaching, Volume 29).

Linnemanstons, K. A., & Jordan, C. M. (2017). Learning through place: Evaluation of a professional

development program for understanding the impact of place-based education and teacher continuing education needs. *Journal of Sustainability Education*, *12*, 1-25.

McInerney, P., Smyth, J., & Down, B. (2011). ‘Coming to a place near you?’ The politics and possibilities

of a critical pedagogy of place-based education. *Asia-Pacific journal of teacher education*, *39*(1), 3-16.