

EPITAPH



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The epitaph or epitaph (Ancient Greek: ἐπιτάφιον, epitáphion, meaning 'that which is above the tomb') is a funerary inscription intended to honour and remember a deceased person. Usually, but not always, it is one or more lines of a poem: many poets have composed their own epitaph. (Wikipedia)

TAGS (3 categorizations)

Is this activity focusing on one of the 3 steps of the method or tackling a transversal challenge facilitators may face?	Step of the method	YES	Decentering X	Discovery of the frames of references of the other	Negotiation
	Challenge treated	NO			

Small Description

Please explain in a short paragraph (using grammatically correct full sentences) what your activity is about, why did you create it?

Each participant is invited to introduce him/herself to the class group by imagining him/herself dead and producing his/her own epitaph: "Here lies...". As well as fostering mutual understanding between participants, this exercise can be used to:

- Break the ice in a stimulating/spiritual/shocking way
- Invite participants to "get involved" right from the start
- Introduce the concepts of identity, culture, intercultural approach
- Introduce the sense of a learning process

Quick info

TIME FRAME	GROUP SIZE	FACILITATION LVL	COMFORT ZONE	MATERIALS
30-60 min	3-18	intermediate		Signs (minimum A3, perhaps in the shape of a tombstone) Markers Candles

Preparations needed

- If possible, set up the setting with suffused lights (or candles, soft music in the background, etc.) and the possibility to perform the activity on the ground
- Provide a suitable space for the display and visitation of epitaphs

Instructions Step By Step

Please give step by step instructions of your activity, including debriefing. Be direct, address the reader as a facilitator directly: eg. ask your participants to stand in a circle...

Step 1.

Presentation of the activity: each person is invited to write a (self) epitaph (HERE HE LIKES...; HE HAS LEAVED US...), functional to the activity of mutual presentation. The facilitator could ask to write a self epitaph including important thing about your life/community/identity. Presentation of the setting set up to support the success of the activity: soft lighting, candles, soft music in the background, cards (as a tombstone?).

Step 2.

Personal moment (10') for writing one's epitaph (on the chairs, on the ground, in a specific corner of the room...). Once the writing is finished. Each person "displays" their epitaph in the specially prepared setting (e.g. with a lit candle).

Step 3.

Everyone is invited to visit (freely, but with due demeanour) the epitaphs on display (5').

Step 4.

New plenary meeting to debrief the activity: How did it go? Difficulties? What emerged?

Return on the sense of this activity

- stimulating-provoking-intriguing tool, which brings into play

- the here and now
- the know how to be dimension as the main field of work of Training in intercultural approach
- the training activity as a process of self change □ to born as a new subject, different from the previous one (whose death we ritualise)
- to introduce a culturally connoted element
- to give mutual meaning (compare Martine Abdallah-Pretceille's definition of "intercultural").

Step 5.

Closing by reading a literary text appropriate to the situation.

Step 6.

Further development of the activity. From the analysis of the epitaph, highlight the identity traits useful to strengthen the role of a trainer in interculturality: why is someone like me entitled to do training on intercultural approach? If we were buried in the mausoleum of the pioneers of interculturality, what would we add/emphasise

Debriefing Highlight the importance of putting oneself at stake to highlight the traits of one's cultural identity (and train one's capacity for decentralisation!).

Hints for the facilitator

- Give few indications, give only the incipit: here lies...
- Explain first what is meant by epitaph
- Do not make the objectives and the meaning of the activity explicit beforehand.
- The trainer can also do the activity

Ressources (Who invented this activity or who inspired it)

If you invented it, please write the name of your colleague and institution as you'd like it to be referenced

If you used ideas /activities of others please put full reference as concretely as you can

Activity developed by Nicola Di Pirro, Giancarlo Domenghini and Marco Muzzana within the training programme "Training of initiation to intercultural approach".