



---

**INCORPORATING CRITICAL  
MOMENTS INTO A COURSE:  
CLOTHING AND HUMAN BEHAVIOR**

Diane Vigna and Reschell Ray  
Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68583

Clothing and Human Behavior is an entry-level course which presents students from across the University with the various functions of and motivations for dress across many cultures. The course covers issues of race, ethnicity, and gender and imparts knowledge and analysis of theoretical concerns, social experiences, or creative works arising from human diversity in the US and the world community.

Critical Moments is a case study discussion method that develops skills in interpersonal communication, critical thinking, and cultural diversity. Cases concern "critical moments," times when, due to differences in race/ethnicity, class, disability, and/or gender, the students felt set apart from the mainstream culture of the university.

Both the Clothing and Human Behavior course and the Critical Moments method strive to help students develop understanding and empathy for fellow human beings and to learn to appreciate the sameness as well as the differences between people.

Each week for 12 weeks students read a case study, then discussed the various controversial topics and wrote of their thoughts pertaining to each case. Insight into feelings about highly sensitive subjects was gained, and students learned to deal with issues from a new perspective.

Course evaluations were mixed. Students appreciated the opportunity to gain insight into problems experienced by others, but several expressed concerns that the Critical Moments experience took too much time away from the remainder of the course.