

Lesson Plan: “Ethnobotany and Drug Discovery”

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Learning Objectives

1. What is the ethnobotanical approach to drug discovery?
2. How can ethnobotanists contribute to global health?
3. What are some examples of ethnobotanical studies that have led to the discovery and development of Western pharmaceutical medicines?

Reading Assignment

- The Ethnobotanical Approach to Drug Discovery (Cox and Balick, 1994 - *Scientific American*)

Video Assignment

- Watch the Science of Ethnobotany video by Paul Cox (6 minutes): <http://youtu.be/9UYl6kmS8fQ>
- Watch Dr. Balick's lecture on this topic of ethnobotany and drug discovery. (~90 minutes) : http://youtu.be/B_B0MD-P1jc

Tasks

Come to class prepared to discuss the videos and reading assignment. You will be divided into small groups and given specific questions to discuss in class (we will not have a lecture, but group discussions instead). Here are some examples of the types of topics that we will discuss:

- What is your understanding of the “ethnobotanical approach” to drug discovery? Use a specific example of a plant to illustrate the link from traditional knowledge to “modern” drug discovery.
- What did you find most interesting about Dr. Balick’s or Dr. Cox's lecture?
- What are your thoughts on recognizing intellectual property rights through co-authorship with indigenous counterparts?
- What is entailed in the job description for an ethnobotanist?

Assessment

You will be graded based on your participation in the class group exercise.